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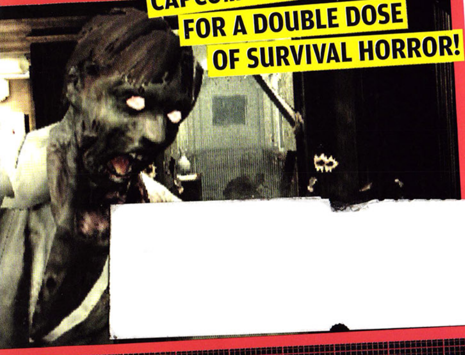

CAPCOM EYES Wii
FOR A DOUBLE DOSE
OF SURVIVAL HORROR!

RESIDENT EVILS

TURN TO PAGE 32

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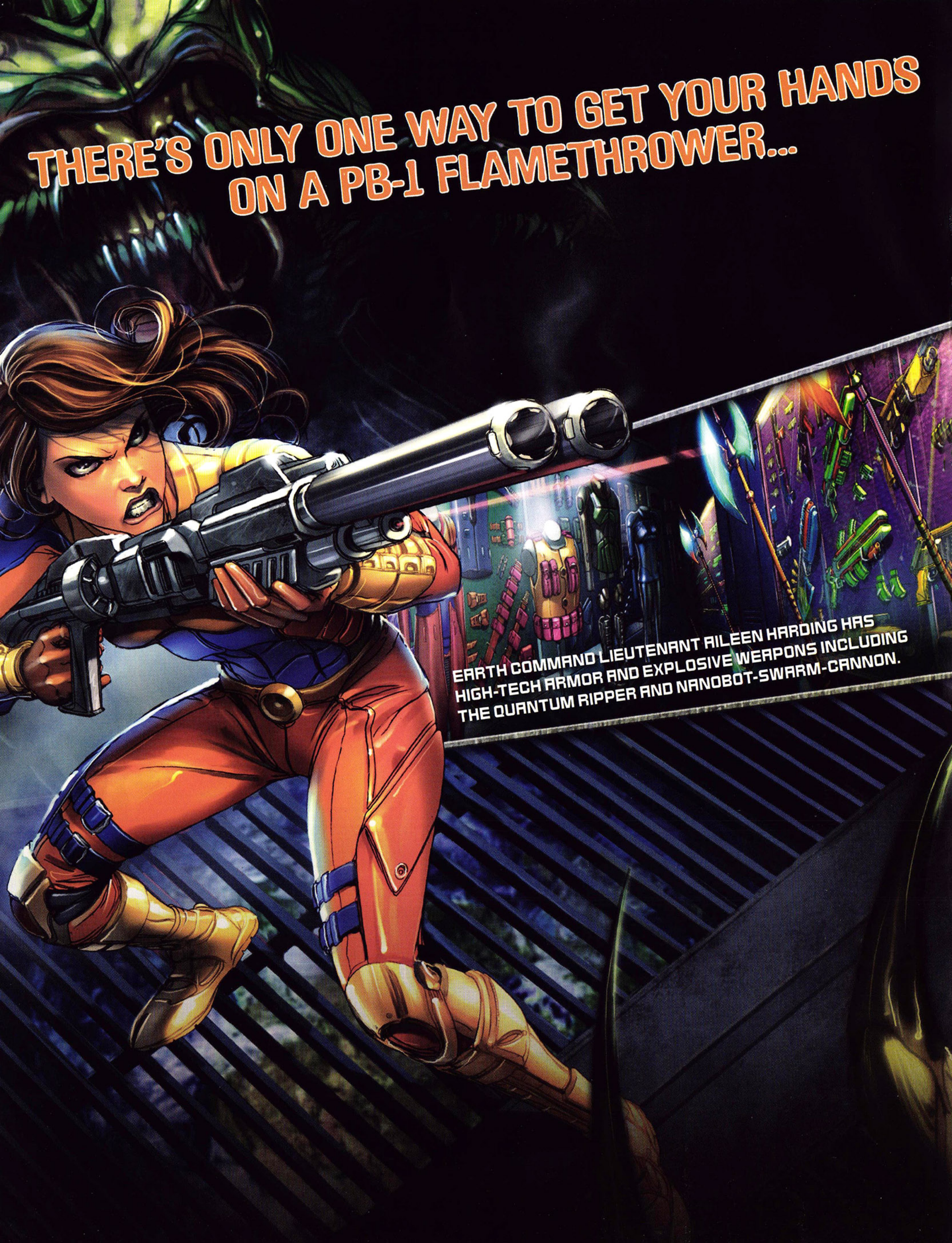
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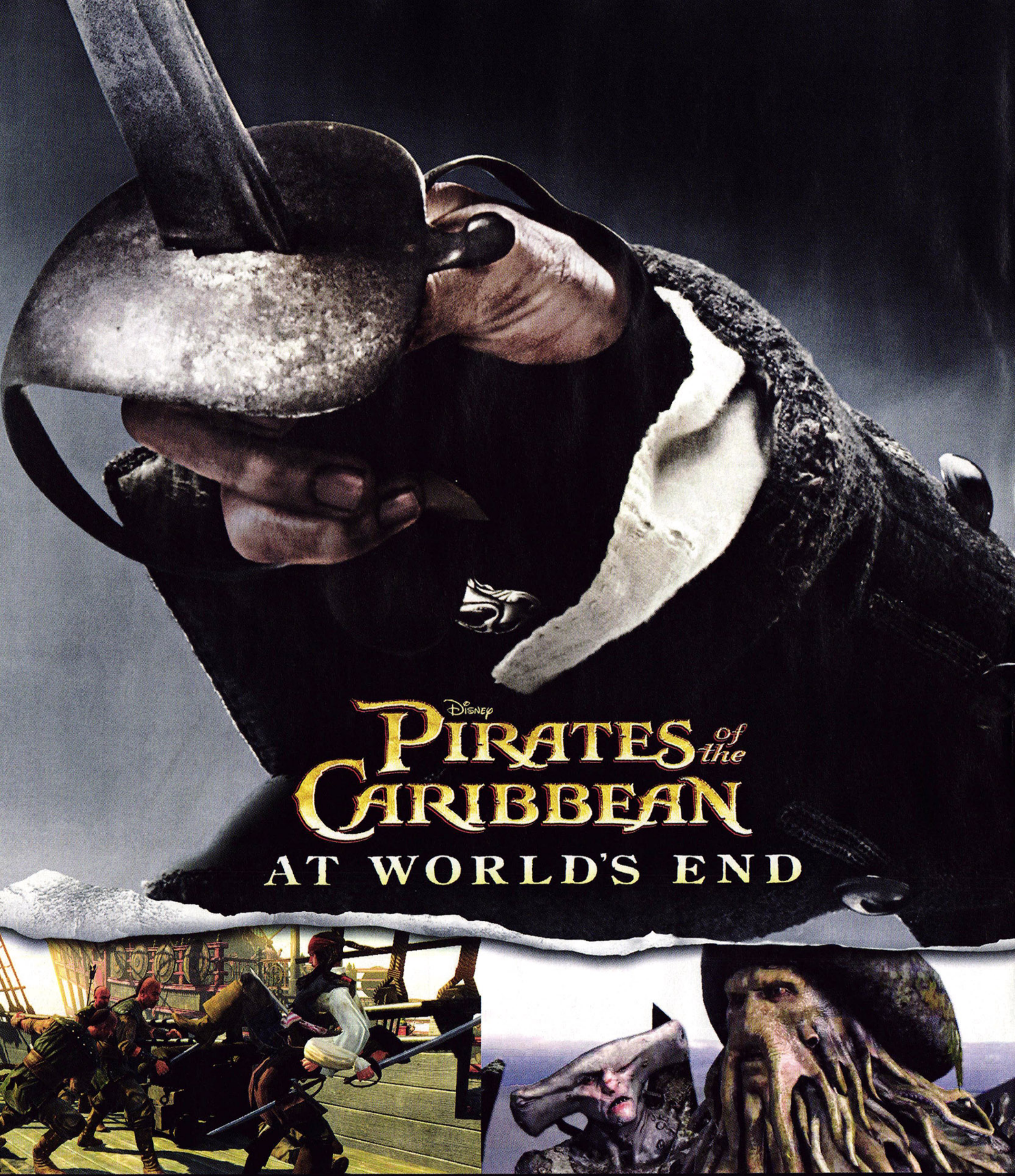

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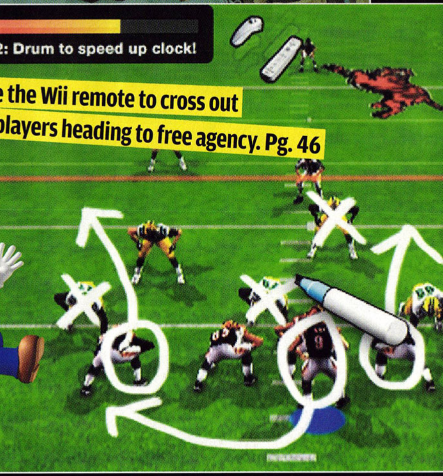

Use the Wii remote to cross out players heading to free agency. Pg. 46

Find out what's chasing them! Pg. 42

FANTASTIC FOUR RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER

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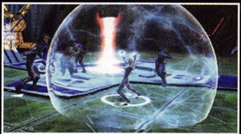
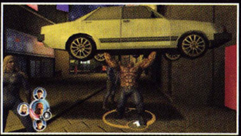


Combine super powers with all-new Fusion Attack System!



Truly destructible environments

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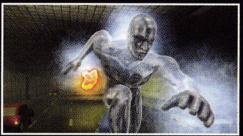

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NINTENDO POWER

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You might feel a mild tingling sensation when you read Nintendo Power.

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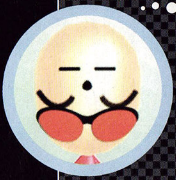
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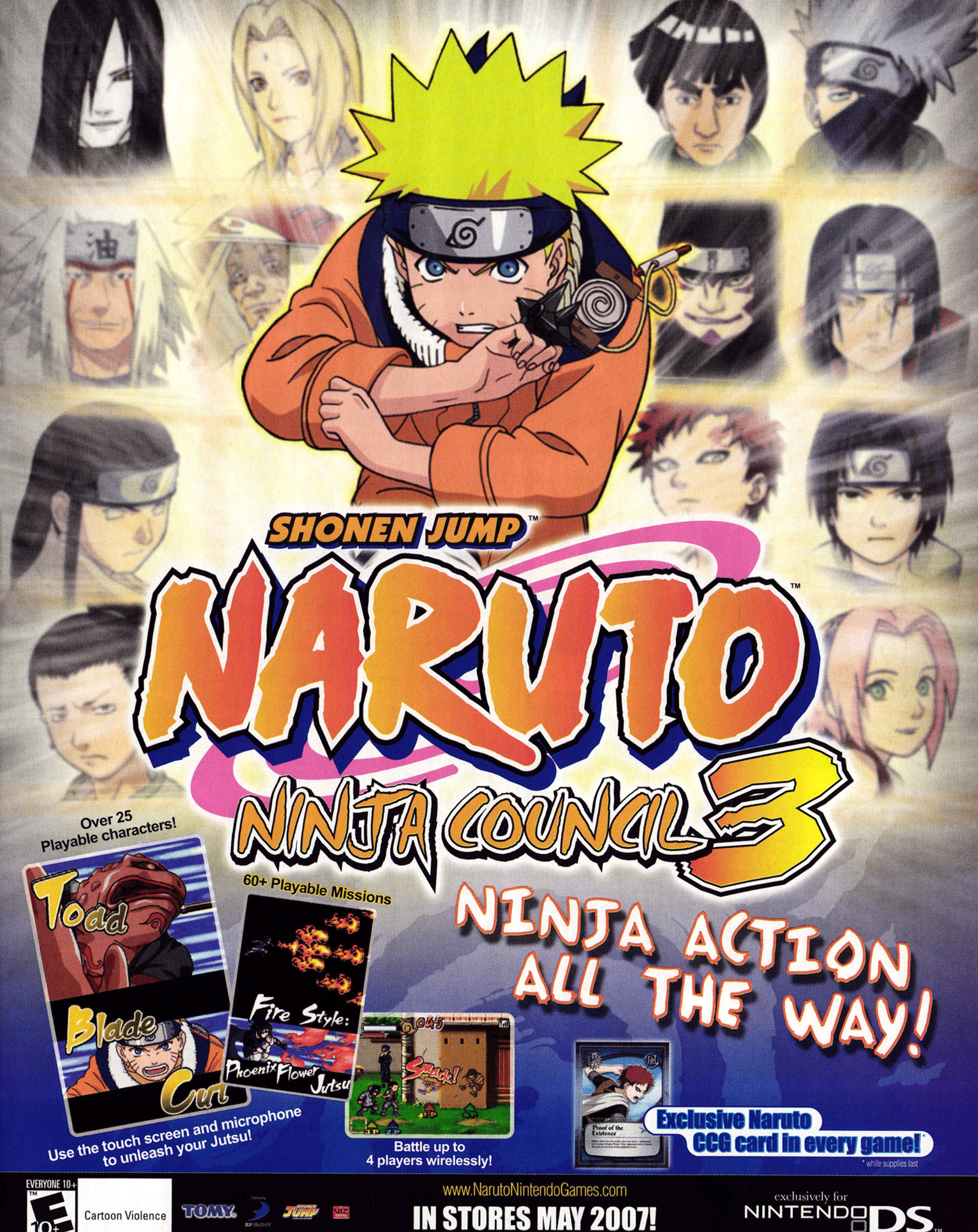
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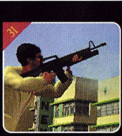
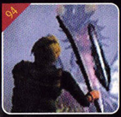
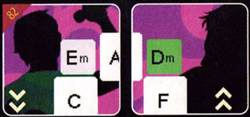
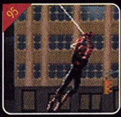
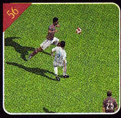
DS = Nintendo DS
GBA = Game Boy Advance
NES = Nintendo Entertainment System
VC = Wii Virtual Console
Wii = Wii

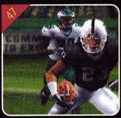


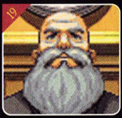












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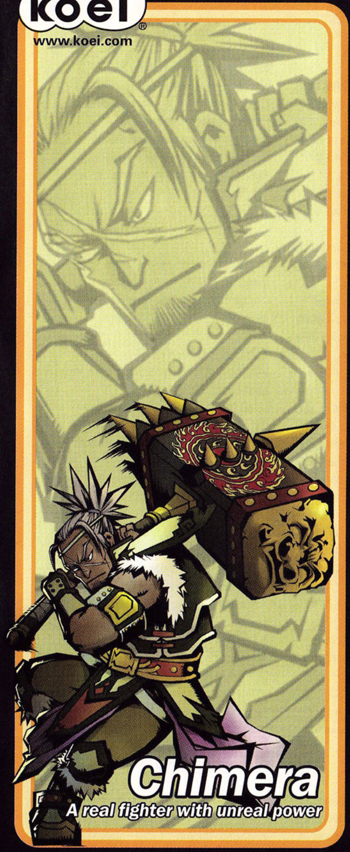
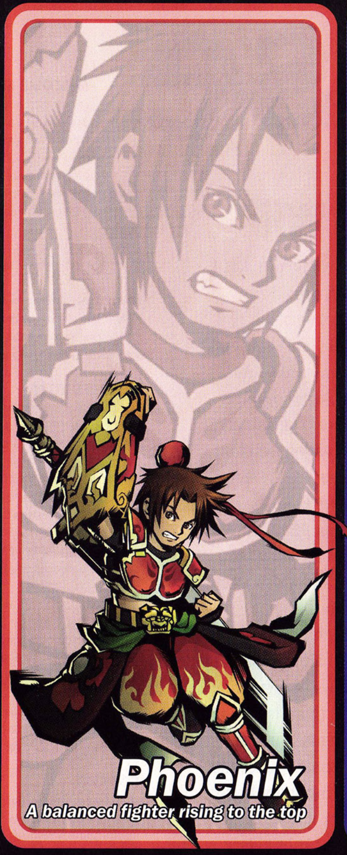


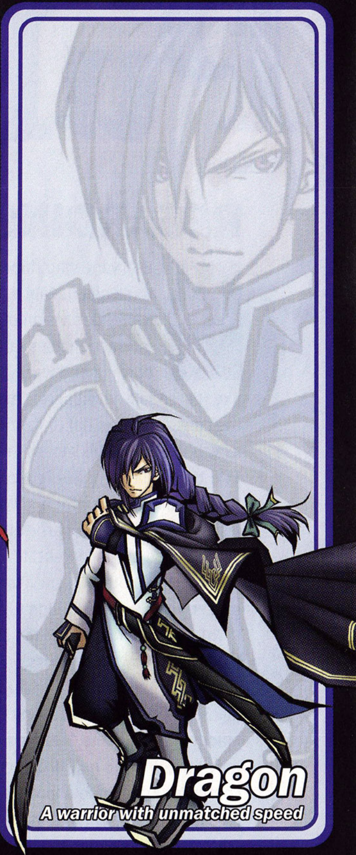
Chimera

A real fighter with unreal power



Phoenix

A balanced fighter rising to the top



Dragon

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14/15
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Wireless Multiplayer

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Pulse

REGARDING Wii

Everyone who thinks Wii is for tykes, think again. Capcom proves that Nintendo's vision of active player interaction goes far beyond realistic bowling and wacky cow races. And like Nintendo's developers, Capcom's recognize the console's potential to captivate core gamers, as you'll learn in this month's revealing Resident Evil: Umbrella Chronicles cover feature. In fact, Capcom didn't stop with one Wii RE title; they also reimagined the award-winning RE4 with Wii controls and extra content. It's an amazing feat, and one that both RE4 survivors and those who missed the original shouldn't ignore.

NP's zombiefest is just the beginning of this issue's fun, however. Sports fans can start waving their giant foam fingers, because we're previewing an all-star library of upcoming Wii titles, including Madden NFL 08, The Bigs, and Legends of the Indy 500. We also hear from legendary Nintendo composer Koji Kondo about creating soundtracks for Mario and Zelda, and maverick mastermind Suda Goichi (aka Suda51), the creator of Killer7, whose current labor of love is an action-adventure for Wii entitled No More Heroes. Want more? How about playing guitar on your DS? Check out our Jam Sessions preview. Or playing Pokémon on your TV? Pokémon Battle Revolution connects Wii to DS and Wii to Wii via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. It's a packed read, so you'd better get started now before the zombies arrive at your door to eat your brain. Don't say I didn't warn you.

Scott Pelland
Managing Editor

LETTERS

WELCOME ABOARD!

I would just like to say welcome to Giancarlo Varanini. After reading some of your reviews in Vol. 215 (like the review for Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII) I'm definitely looking forward to seeing more of you in the future!

Barto1225
via the Internet

Giancarlo's been with us for only a few months, and already he's making a splash; his latest masterpiece is this month's cover story on the Resident Evil games.

GET USED TO IT

I simply cannot understand how Giancarlo rated Puzzle Quest a 4.0! This is easily one of the best and most addictive DS games to come out in the last six months. I don't have time to address your issues with the game since I disagree with them all. How do you explain the fact that your review is so far out of line with all others? Being the outlier, I deem you statistically insignificant.

David T.
via the Internet

P.S. The guys over at Penny Arcade summed it up best: "The game is a feast for the spirit."

Like we said: welcome aboard, Giancarlo! You didn't think it would be all cover stories and warm hugs, did ya?

FOX ART

While hoping for Nintendo to announce a Star Fox game for the Wii, I decided to make a Star Fox-themed tile mosaic in my art class. What do you think?

Brody S.
via the Internet

WE MAKE UP MOST OF IT

Where do you guys get such good game info? I never find much when I look up games like Harvest Moon: Rune Factory, Dewy's Adventure, and Super Paper Mario. The only game I searched for that I found info on was Final Fantasy IV Advance.

Evan B.
via the Internet

It's the usual combination of waiting for the phone to ring, reading Internet forums, and nagging PR people. Hey, whatever gets the job done, right?

YOUTH GONE WILD

My little brother is in the first grade. He loves Super Smash Bros. When he heard that a new Super Smash was coming out he yelled, "FALCON PUNCH!" at his teacher, and now she thinks that he needs to see the counselor. She thinks that he may be mentally challenged. What is your verdict?

HenryoCrazy
via the Internet

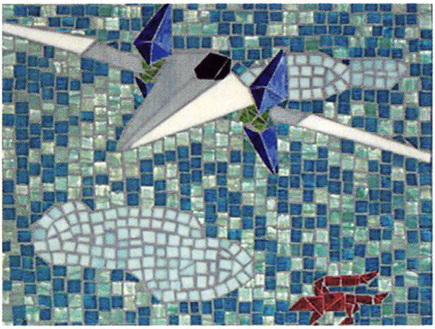
Seeing how we've had to deal with our little brothers year after year, we have to side with the teacher on this one.

START THE FIRE!

Are there any hints of a Fire Emblem being developed for the DS? Fire Emblem fans everywhere are hungry for a classic handheld Fire Emblem to blister our palms and redden our eyes. I'd trade both my sisters for a DS Fire Emblem.

Erik G.
via the Internet

Your sisters are safe for now—Nintendo hasn't announced a DS Fire Emblem game yet. You can bet we'll be all over it when the time comes.

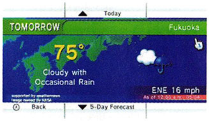


That's pretty sweet, Brody; we'll give it an A- (we're harsh reviewers, after all).

SUNNY IN THE RISING SUN

I noticed something odd during my time messing with the Weather Channel—Japan has different weather display symbols than the rest of the world. Why is this?

Michael S.
via the Internet



We're not quite sure why Japan has different icons for their weather systems, but being in Seattle makes us want a special rain symbol, for sure.

FUN FOR EVERYONE

Hey, guys, what's up with games like That's So Raven and Hannah Montana? What purpose do they serve except to punish people at Nintendo Power? Seriously, do these games even have a plot or objectives or anything?

Link Lord
via the Internet

Hey, now, play nice. Licensed games like those might not always be of Mario-esque quality, but some of them are genuinely good. Besides, who doesn't love a good Billy Ray Cyrus cameo?

GET TO THE POINT

I was going through some of my old copies of Nintendo Power when I noticed that one of the sections was removed without me noticing. Whatever happened to Point/Counterpoint? It was a great section of the magazine, and I find it hard to believe that the writers at NP have run out of things to argue about.

Sam J.
via the Internet

Strangely, we haven't had much to argue about recently. If anyone has suggestions for future Point/Counterpoint "discussions," feel free to send 'em in.

CATEGORICALLY WRONG?

What's up with the Nintendo Power Awards? It just seems that over the past couple years the Power Awards seem to have gone downhill. The days of humorous categories such as Best Mullet, Best Weapon, or Best Guilty Pleasure are gone. Now all we have are the stale, generic categories like Best GCN, Best RPG, Best Graphics that every other magazine has. I loved how NP used to include those funky categories because it showcases other games aside from the obvious winners. I hoped they would return in this year's NP Awards, but nope; you guys stripped it down even more. Please, I'm begging you guys, please return the NP Awards to the way they used to be!

Celebistar
via the Internet

I guess that's one thing we still debate around here. We try to make the Power Awards fun, but also meaningful. We'll surely revisit the topic next year.

BOSS STRATEGIES

I thought Twilight Princess was great and that it deserved a lot of awards, but I found it repetitive. Have you ever noticed how you always have to fight one of the minibosses like the baboon in Forest Temple to get a beneficial item such as the Clawshot or Hero's Bow? It's annoying how, if you haven't faced this guy, you can't hope to get to the real boss. And this happens in every dungeon! Come on, Nintendo! Don't give us something repetitive.

B-Day Boy
via the Internet

This is Zelda Theory 101. You enter a dungeon, beat a miniboss to get a new item, use the new item on the final boss, and repeat. The formula has worked for 20 years; don't expect the developers to change their methods any time soon.

DEVELOPMENTALLY CHALLENGED

You guys should make a *Star Wars* game for Wii! You could use the Wii controller for the lightsaber, use the nunchuk to move around, and use the C Button to use the Force!

Cody W.
via the Internet

We can't count how many times we've said this, but we don't make the games and we can't control which ones get made. Most months, we can barely write about them without screwing it all up.

BE COOL

I have a question about the Wii. I'm concerned that it will overheat when I leave it connected via WiiConnect24. I fear I'm not taking full advantage of my Wii because of this. So, will the Wii overheat or is there nothing to worry about and I'm just paranoid?

Eric
via the Internet

Don't sweat it, Eric—the Wii is designed to stay online in standby mode without getting hot enough to damage the system.

MAYBE IN YOUR DREAMS

I have a couple questions regarding upcoming titles. First, the info for Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games on Nintendo's home page says that the two characters appear in the same game for the first time in history, but I think that's wrong. If I recall, there was an SNES Sonic game where you had to save Mario—you even saw Mario on the first level. Also, on the bottom of the box art for the DS Opera browser it says "only for DS Lite." Is this true?

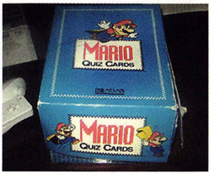
Logifair
via the Internet

The answer is no on both. There has never been a game that featured both Mario and Sonic (Steve, our Sonic expert, flew off the handle when he saw your letter, by the way). Also, there will be two versions of the Opera Browser for DS, one for each model of the handheld system.

IT'S IN THE CARDS

My neighbor was selling these Mario Quiz Cards for a buck at a garage sale. I figured you guys could tell me more about them (when they were made, how much they're worth, etc.).

Chocaca2000
via the Internet

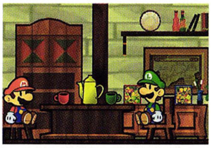


We've heard that maybe some NP writers of yore wrote the questions for these trivia cards, but that's about the extent of our knowledge.

WHERE'S MARIO?

Since you were showing in-game cameos in a previous Pulse, I just wanted to point out a couple at the beginning of Super Paper Mario. There are two pictures in Mario's house—the one on the right shows characters from the first Paper Mario, and the one on the left shows characters from Paper Mario: The Thousand Year Door.

Dylan
via the Internet



PRODUCT PLACEMENT

What if Nintendo came out with laptop computers and cell phones? The laptops could look like the Wii, the cell phones could look like the DS Lites and both of them could be compatible with their respective games. Plus, Nintendo could partner up with one of the big wireless providers.

Wil K.
via the Internet

I was thinking that Nintendo should start making stuff other than games. They could branch out and make PCs and televisions. Game systems are very similar to these devices, so they'd have no trouble manufacturing them.

ThisGuy
via the Internet

I was wondering if Nintendo had ever thought of running a television channel. Wouldn't it be great if all we had to do was turn on the TV and see previews, reviews, talk shows, etc. of Nintendo games and systems? Maybe they could even have a segment discussing older games. You should put a bug in the ear of one of the big wigs at NOA.

Kryptoxide
via the Internet

Yikes! Nintendo doesn't have any plans to do anything else besides what they do best—make games. We think that's a pretty good plan in itself.

TONGUE-TIED

Unfathomably upholding your vast, eloquent repertoire of your written word, I have come to a supposition about a very simple depiction of your magazine: that it is meant for the broods and not for the ripened gamers. Care to give an explanation?

Fausto C.
via the Internet

Sure. You just found out how to use a thesaurus, and want to put it to use in the most absurd way you could think of. Are we close?

HOLD YOUR POMMEL HORSES

How come there has never been an article on Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games? Either shed more light on this title or you'll never see Chris Shepperd again!

Dylan M.
via the Internet

Relax! The game was just announced; we'll have more info when it's available. And you can keep Chris; we don't need him.

What the heck is going on with E3 this year? I knew you guys said that the show was going to be scaled back quite a bit, but I just saw the show's floor plans that just got released and I can't believe my eyes. Judging by the size, I could probably hold this year's E3 in my living room! I've always relied on the time around E3 to provide me with the best gaming news of the year; now I'm concerned I'm not going to get my fix. I know there's another event later on in the year, but that's just too far away! Tell me there's hope for E3—not only do I want to hear about all the upcoming games, but I hope to attend the show someday, too.

Pete S.
via the Internet

There's a lot of confusion about what's going on with E3. True, the annual trade show is much smaller than it has been in years past, but that doesn't mean game publishers aren't eager to get the word out about their upcoming titles. Many companies will be hosting their own events to feature upcoming games throughout the summer; stick with us over the following months to get a more spread-out scoop on all the hot games.

YOU CAN'T FOOL US

I was playing Super Smash Bros. Melee the other day and I thought of something that would be great for Brawl: items that only specific characters could use, like a rifle that only Snake could use, or a Chaos Emerald that would let Sonic (or Shadow) use chaos powers. If Kirby was using the right costume, he could use them all, too. Also, if there were power-ups for specific characters (like different beams for Samus or different kinds of bullets for Snake), that would add a lot of options, too.

Leo A.
via the Internet

We see what you did there—you expect us to agree and acknowledge passively the existence of Sonic in Brawl. Well, we're not that dumb, and there's still no word on whether Sega's blue wonder will make a Brawl appearance.

PANIC OVER POKéMON

With Pokémon Diamond and Pearl's launch, and because of their dual-slot GBA connectivity, I picked up Pokémon Emerald. I just recently found out that to unlock Pal Park and transfer my Pokémon from Emerald, you must see all the Pokémon in your copy of Diamond or Pearl (although thankfully not catch them). What I want to know is, can you see all the Pokémon in Diamond without having to trade or battle with someone else who has Pearl, and vice versa? I don't have access to wireless Internet, so Wi-Fi is really out of the question for me. Also, I don't have any friends who plan to get the Pearl version of this game. I really don't want to have bought Emerald for nothing.

Austin R.
via the Internet

Don't worry—you can unlock Pal Park by playing only your copy of Diamond. Just be sure to battle every Trainer you see to ensure that you encounter all of Pearl's Pokémon.

I have some questions about transferring Pokémon from my GBA games to my Diamond version. I have an awesome-looking shiny Zangoose; will it lose its special colors once it has been transferred to the DS version? Also, I am planning to send over items that are to be held by my Pokémon. Can the items really be transferred between those games?

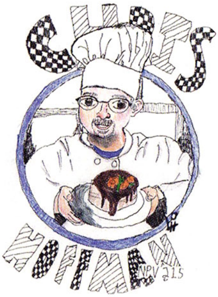
Daniel N.
via the Internet

Never fear: your Pokémon will retain their shiny state and held items when they're transferred to your DS game.

CHRIS THE CHEF

In the May issue [Volume 215], I was amused by Chris Hoffman's article on real cooking versus video game cooking. I became so fond of the article, I even drew some fan art—Chris Hoffman with a cake.

Lynette H.
via the Internet



HOT SUMMER NIGHTS

I know it's a little early, but what's up with Camp Hyrule 2007? The website says to "stay tuned for more information on Camp Hyrule 2007," but it's said that for months now. What's going on?

liamtheechidna
via the Internet

NOA Andy assures us that plans for Camp Hyrule's 2007 are underway. You're doing the right thing by regularly checking www.camphyrule.com.

WE FINALLY GOT ONE RIGHT!

During your preview of Naruto: Ninja Council 3, you wrote that in order to perform secret techniques, you have to line up the correct Chinese symbols. They are actually Japanese symbols, not Chinese.

Lunarsnakes
via the Internet

The symbols we mentioned, Japanese kanji, are actually borrowed directly from Chinese, and have much the same meaning in both languages; the word "kanji" even means "Chinese character."

CORRECTOR'S CORNER

I was reading the 2006 Nintendo Power Awards, and I came to Best GameCube game. While the winner didn't surprise me you used a screenshot from the Wii version.

Michael N.
via the Internet

While skimming through Volume 215, I happened to notice that in the Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time fold-out map you incorrectly labeled the Longshot found in the Water Temple as the Hookshot.

Dalkes4
via the Internet

THE FINAL WORD

Who the heck is writing the responses in Pulse? I mean, whoever it is should maybe look for a letter that has a point instead of random, non-Nintendo-related crap.

Michael D.
via the Internet

Sweet, sweet irony.

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NINTENDO POWER

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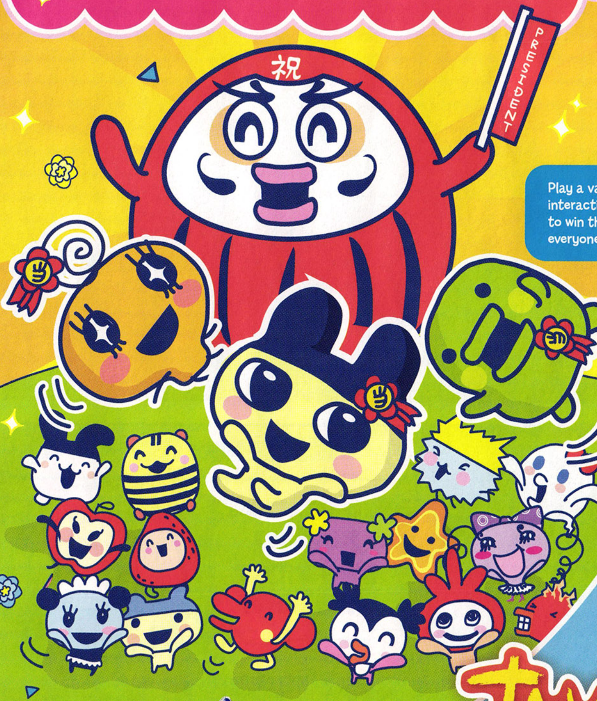

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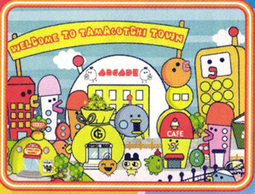

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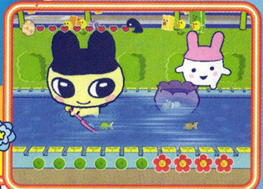

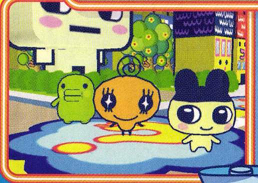

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Wii™

IN STORES JUNE 2007!

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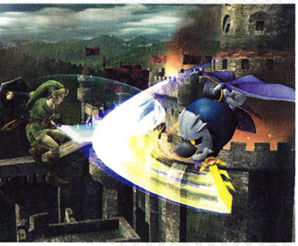
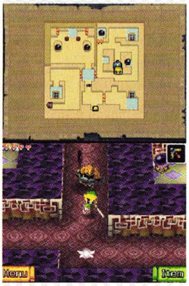
MOST WANTED

As voted by the readers. Go to nintendo.com/mostwanted and let your voice be heard!



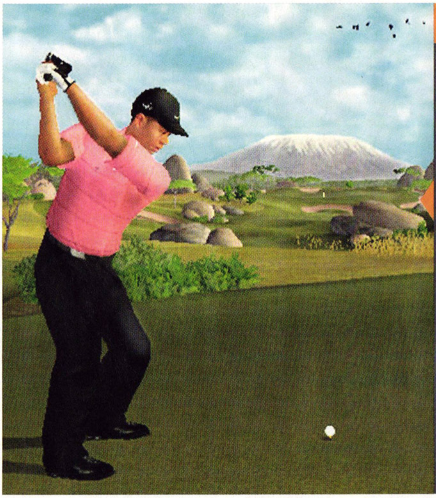
>Wii

1. Super Smash Bros. Brawl
2. Metroid Prime 3: Corruption
3. Pokémon Battle Revolution
4. Super Mario Galaxy
5. Fire Emblem



>NINTENDO DS

1. The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass
2. Final Fantasy XII: Revenant Wings
3. Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates
4. SimCity DS
5. Mega Man Star Force



TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO Wii

Plenty of newcomers made the list this month, but Ubisoft's Red Steel and Rayman Raving Rabbids are holding strong.

1. Wii Play
2. Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07
3. Sonic and the Secret Rings
4. The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
5. WarioWare: Smooth Moves
6. Cooking Mama: Cook Off
7. Rayman Raving Rabbids
8. SSX Blur
9. TMNT
10. Red Steel

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO DS

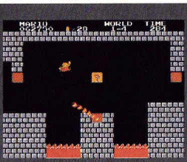
We were ho-hum about Diddy Kong's arrival on the DS, but this month's sales information has made a monkey out of us.

1. Diddy Kong Racing DS
2. Spectrobes
3. New Super Mario Bros.
4. Mario Kart DS
5. Kirby: Squeak Squad
6. Wario: Master of Disguise
7. Nintendogs: Dalmatian and Friends
8. Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day
9. Yoshi's Island 2
10. Cooking Mama

Add toppings freely!
perfect! Even better than Mama!
Very good!
Take

>VIRTUAL CONSOLE—NES DOWNLOADS TO DATE

It's time to party like it's 1989. The very building blocks of the Big N—Mario, Zelda, and DK—continue to attract old-school gamers, and players who weren't born when the games debuted are experiencing the love for the first time.

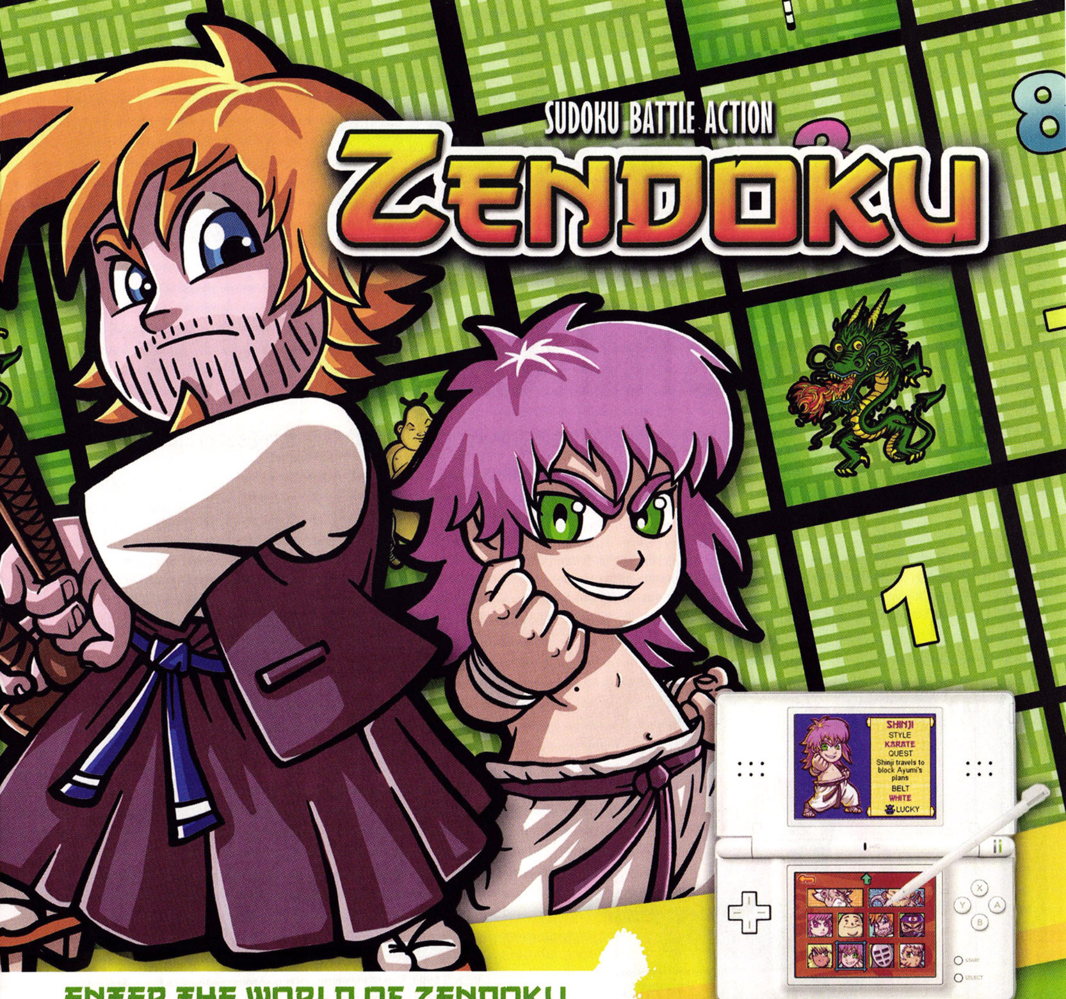


1. Super Mario Bros.
2. The Legend of Zelda
3. Mario Bros.
4. Kirby's Adventure
5. Donkey Kong

Sales data courtesy of the NPDFunworld TRSTS Video Game Source.

SUDOKU BATTLE ACTION

ZENDOKU



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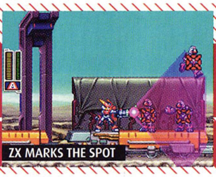

ZX MARKS THE SPOT

NAMCO GOES AVANT-GARDE

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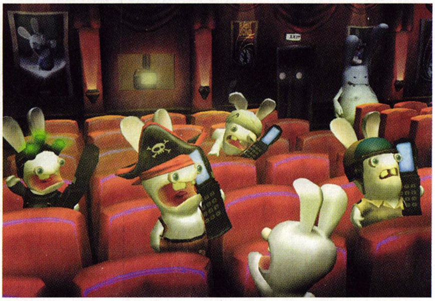
SONIC DELIVERS ANOTHER RUSH

DAWN OF THE DERANGED

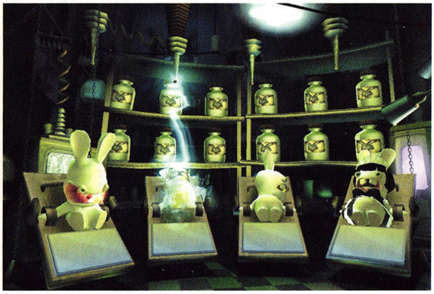
The Bunnies Are Back

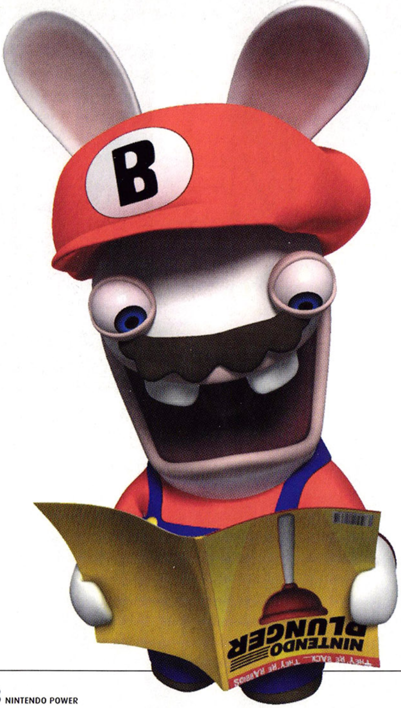
Evidently bunnies can do sequels. Ubisoft's crazed critters return to Wii for another bout of minigame madness in Rayman Raving Rabbids 2. Hide your heifers!

As of April, the original Rayman Raving Rabbids stands as the best-selling third-party title on Wii. It should come as no surprise, then, that Ubisoft is preparing a follow-up for release this fall. After invading Rayman's world in the first game, the Rabbids have set their sights on a new target for part two: planet Earth. The lovably maniacal lagomorphs have established their base of operations in a shopping mall, and as they begin their training for world domination, it's up to Rayman to foil their plans by infiltrating the Rabbid camp as one of them. Naturally, wacky minigame hijinx ensue. While at the movies, for instance, you'll hold the Wii remote to your ear as if it were a cell phone. When the rabbid usher walks by, you must quickly lower the controller from your ear, or you'll get caught and lose points. While the usher is watching, you can send text messages to the other bunnies by rapidly pressing the A Button, causing their phones to ring and getting them in trouble (i.e., making giant appliances fall on their heads). Another minigame has you holding the Wii remote in your palm and trying to balance a sandwich piled all the way to the ceiling. Your goal is to deliver the meal to the gaping maw of the Rabbid godfather without dropping it on the floor. Sounds like an offer we can't refuse. —Steve T.



Sadly, this looks a lot like your typical moviegoing experience these days. Fair warning: if you talk during the film and a member of the NP crew is in the audience, he or she may hit you with a plunger.



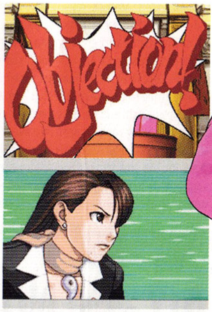


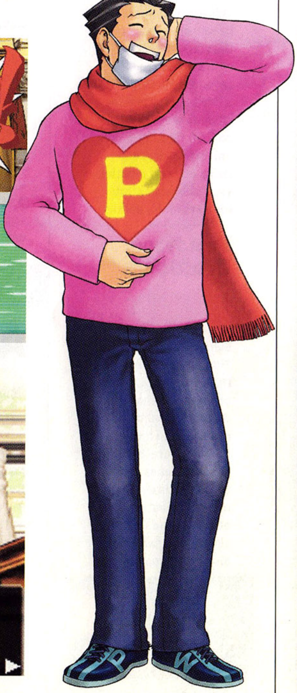
TAKE THAT!

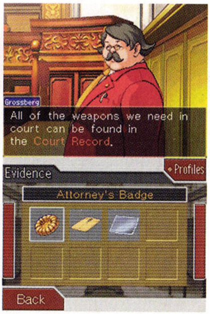
Trial of the Century

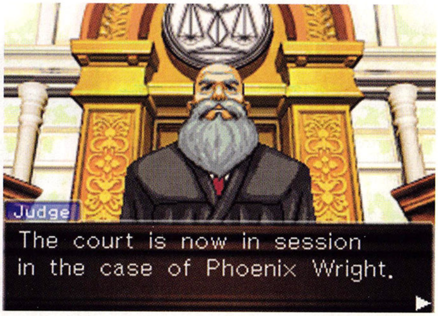
The saga of gaming's greatest lawyer concludes in Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Trials and Tribulations.

With two successful courtroom outings in his briefcase, Phoenix Wright is returning to DS this September in the third and final installment of his lighthearted legal trilogy. Like the previous two titles, Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Trials and Tribulations is a DS-enhanced adaptation of a Japan-exclusive GBA game. Fans of Capcom's graphic/text adventure series already know what to expect: lots of snappy dialogue, examination of crime scenes, presenting of evidence to expose lies, and picking apart of witnesses' testimonies until the guilty parties break down on the stand. Familiar features like the Psyche-Lock system—in which you show evidence to make witnesses reveal the truth—make their return, and new gameplay aspects are introduced, such as flashback cases that put you in the role of Phoenix's late mentor Mia Fey. (In the game's opening chapter, she defends a youthful Phoenix from a murder accusation.) While Trials and Tribulations promises to wrap up Phoenix's story with a bang, don't expect it to be the last Ace Attorney title. The fourth game in the series (featuring a new lead character) recently hit Japan and sold more than 500,000 copies. —**Chris H.**






Grossberg
All of the weapons we need in court can be found in the Court Record.

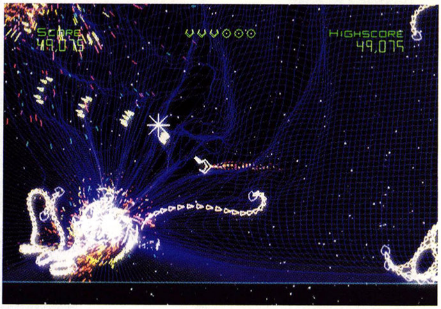

Judge
The court is now in session in the case of Phoenix Wright.

GALAXY QUEST

Get in Shape

Yes, it's true. The frantic, shape-shooting masterpiece Geometry Wars is coming to DS and Wii in the form of Geometry Wars: Galaxies.

There's one simple reason why Geometry Wars: Retro Evolved rose to fame on Xbox Live Arcade: it's insanely addictive. Now the dev team responsible for Battalion Wars is taking Geometry Wars in a new direction, transforming the franchise from a pick-up-and-play arcade experience to a full-fledged game with an extensive single-player campaign. You'll use motion control in the Wii version and touch control in the DS version to navigate your craft through various stages and defend the galaxy. Details are scarce, but we do know that the games are exclusive to Nintendo's systems, and that each version will include a multiplayer mode. Fans of the original will be glad to know that both versions from Retro Evolved will be included, as well. Expect Galaxies to land sometime this fall. —**Andy M.**



Evolved mode in Geometry Wars: Galaxies' Wii version looks every bit as feverish as in the original.

NEWS BYTES

The Soul Still Burns

Namco Bandai forges a Wii-exclusive Soul Calibur adventure.

This winter gamers will be welcomed back to the stage of history with Soul Calibur Legends (working title), a third-person action-adventure set in the popular fighting game universe. Be sure to check out next month's exclusive cover story for all the juicy details.

Bandicoot Beatdown

Crash goes on the attack in his Wii debut.

Sierra's Crash of the Titans, slated for an October release, places a greater emphasis on combat than did previous games in the series. The hook: Crash can hijack enemies and use their creature-specific moves against each other. DS and GBA versions of the game are also in development.

Monolithic Investment

The big N makes an intriguing acquisition.

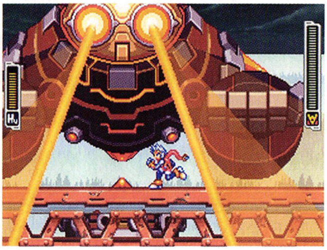
Nintendo recently purchased an 80% stake in developer Monolith Soft from Namco Bandai. Monolith is best known for the Xenosaga and Baten Kaitos games, and is currently working on Disaster: Day of Crisis for Wii. Namco Bandai retains a 16% stake in the studio (with the remaining 4%, we assume, in the hands of some mysterious cabal).

ZXTRA! ZXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Mega Man Morphs Again

New characters, new powers, and new Mega Man forms rock the DS in Capcom's Mega Man ZX sequel.

Capcom breathed new life into the Mega Man franchise last year with Mega Man ZX—a game that augmented the series' signature 2-D action with an interconnected world and the ability to transform into various Mega Man "models." This October, the sequel—Mega Man ZX Advent—will arrive on DS to add even more features to the tried-and-true formula. Players will once again be able to choose from either a male or female protagonist (Grey or Ash) and harness the power of Biometals; the living metals allow you to morph into five Mega Man types, such as the mighty Model A, which comes equipped with a homing laser and the ability to transform into enemy bosses. Other additions include an improved map system and both co-op and versus wireless two-player modes. —Chris H.



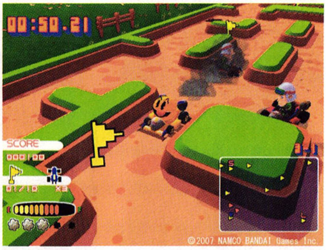
Grey and Ash can utilize numerous forms in Mega Man ZX Advent, including a human form. A new touch-screen interface makes transforming easier than ever.

ARTISTRY IN MOTION

Arcade Nouveau

Namco Bandai announces a new collection of classic Namco arcade titles, reinvented for the Wii generation.

Some of Namco's biggest arcade titles are getting a makeover: Namco Museum Remix revamps quarter-eaters like Galaga and Rally-X into a completely new experience for Wii. In all, five classic games will receive an overhaul that includes reimagined graphics and total Wii-remote functionality. The publisher says that despite the new look, the games will stay true to their classic style. In addition to the revamped titles, Namco Museum Remix will feature nine classic arcade games—including Galaxian, Xevious, and Pac-Mania—in their original form. Namco Bandai has also announced Namco Museum DS, a treasure trove of classic arcade games. Look for the DS game this summer, and Namco Museum Remix sometime in the fall. —Chris S.



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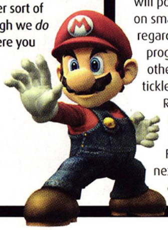
DON'T-MISS Calendar

This is typically the time of year that couples exchange marriage vows, so we just want to say that we love you, dear reader. And we mean that in a healthy, non-stalker sort of way. Though we *do* know where you live. . . .



5-22

Sakurai delivers the blow by blow.

Beginning May 22nd, Super Smash Bros. Brawl director Masahiro Sakurai will post a daily blog on smashbros.com regarding the title's progress and any other topics that tickle his fancy. Rumor has it he'll be revealing Fabio as the next playable character.

6-4

The DS Lite gets on the World Wide Interwebs.

With the DS Lite Web Browser, you'll even be able to check out Sakurai's blog away from home. The Opera-based software (which has an MSRP of $34.99) is also handy for getting directions, looking up movie times, and settling arguments about Faceman's real name on the A-Team. (It's Lt. Templeton Peck.)

6-19

Chainsaw grandmas come to Wii.

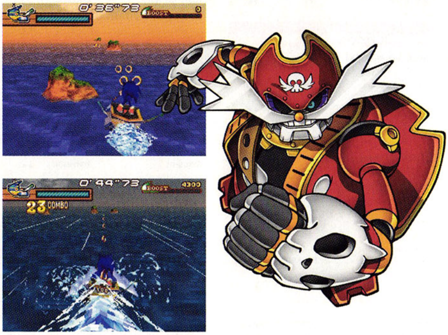
If you didn't play Capcom's survival-horror masterpiece on GameCube, Resident Evil 4: Wii Edition is your chance at redemption. If you miss out on this one, we might have to take back what we said earlier about loving you.

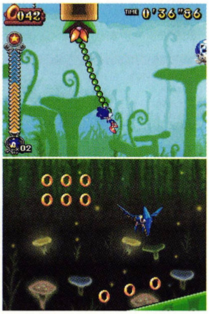
GO, SONIC! GO!

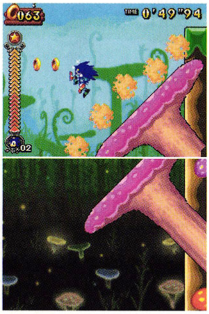
Speeding on the High Seas

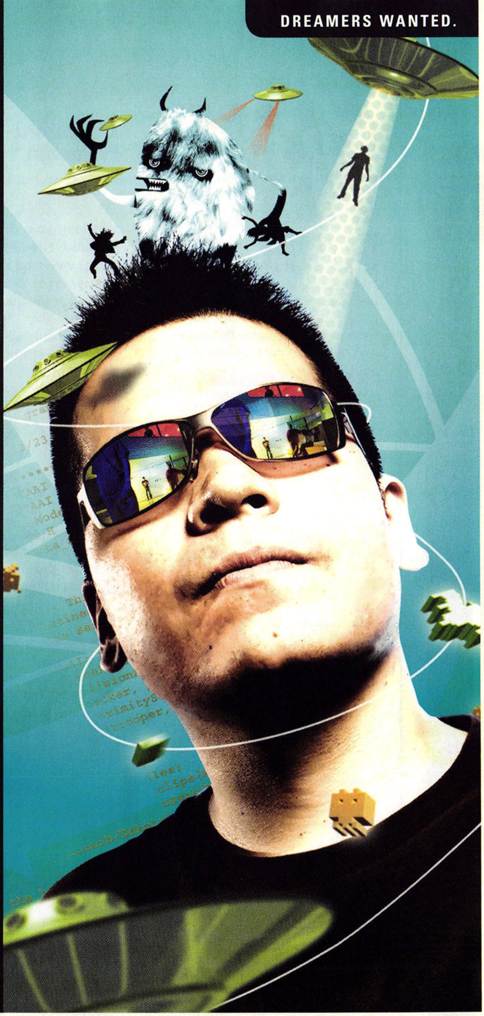
Sonic returns in another adventure for the Nintendo DS, this time on both land and sea.

Sonic Rush was one of the best Sonic the Hedgehog games we've seen in years. It not only captured the spirit of the original games, but it also made pretty good use of the DS's dual-screen setup. Now Sega's looking to release a sequel, Sonic Rush Adventure, that will feature similar high-speed 2-D action, with Sonic zooming in between screens as he ventures to several islands, each of which contains its own set of levels. Sonic's main mission is to hunt down his latest threat—robot pirates led by the dreaded Captain Whisker, who looks an awful lot like Dr. Robotnik with a pirate hat—by using one of five water craft (options include a hovercraft, a submarine, and a water bike). You'll gain access to the vehicles by searching for new materials that you can give to your trusty sidekick and mutated squirrel, Tails. Sonic Rush Adventure will feature some 3-D gameplay where Sonic can collect additional rings while avoiding obstacles. Boss battles also take place in 3-D segments that use both screens. Look for it this fall. —Giancarlo V.





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GAME WATCH FORECAST

The flood of new Wii and DS announcements continues this month with some pretty heavy hitters. With both systems selling phenomenally well across the globe, we don't expect things to slow any time soon.

Announced
In Development
Ready for Release

Game Title	Publisher	●●●
Game Title	Publisher	●●● —New games added to the list

Wii

Agatha Christie: And Then There Were None	The Adventure Company	●●○
Alien Syndrome	Sega	●●○
Battalion Wars 2	Nintendo	●●○
Big Brain Academy	Nintendo	●●○
The Bigs	2K Sports	●●○
Blitz: The League	Midway	●●○
Boogie	Electronic Arts	●●○
Brothers in Arms: Double Time	Ubisoft	●●○
Brunswick Pro Bowling	Crave	●●○
Bust-a-Move Bash!	Majesco	●●●
Code Lyoko	American Game Factory	●●○
Counter Force	Conspiracy	●●○
Crash of the Titans	Sierra	●●○
Dance Dance Revolution Hottest Party	Konami	●●○
Dave Mirra BMX Challenge	Crave	●●○
Destiny of Zorro	TBD	●●○
Dewy's Adventure	Konami	●●○
Disaster: Day of Crisis	Nintendo	●●○
Dragon Quest Swords: The Masked Queen and the Tower of Mirrors	Square Enix	●●○
Driver: Parallel Lines	Ubisoft	●●○
Emergency Mayhem	Codemasters	●●○
Escape from Bug Island!	Eidos	●●●
Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer	2K Games	●●○
Ferrari Challenge	System 3	●○○
FIFA 08	Electronic Arts	●●○
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Crystal Bearers	Square Enix	●●○
Fire Emblem*	Nintendo	●●○
Geometry Wars: Galaxies	Sierra	●●○
Godzilla: Unleashed	Atari	●●○
The Golden Compass	Sega	●○○
Harry Potter and The Order of the Phoenix	Electronic Arts	●●○
Harvest Moon Wii*	Natsume	●●○
Legends of the Indy 500	Destineer	●●○
LEGO Batman: The Videogame	Warner Bros. Interactive	●○○
Line Rider	inXile	●○○
Looney Tunes: Acme Arsenal	Warner Bros. Interactive	●●○
Madden NFL 08	Electronic Arts	●●○
Manhunt 2	Rockstar	●●○
Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games	Sega	●●○
Mario Party 8	Nintendo	●●●
Mario Strikers: Charged	Nintendo	●●○
Metroid Prime 3: Corruption	Nintendo	●●○
Mortal Kombat: Armageddon	Midway	●●●
Namco Museum Remix	Namco Bandai	●●○
Naruto: Clash of Ninja Wii*	D3PA/Tomy	●●○
NBA Live 08	Electronic Arts	●●○
NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams	Sega	●●○
Ninjabread Man	Conspiracy	●●○
One Piece: Unlimited Adventure	Namco Bandai	●●○
Opoona	Koei	●●○
Pinball Hall of Fame: The Williams Collection	Crave	●●○
Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End	Disney Interactive	●●●
Playground	Electronic Arts	●●○
Pokémon Battle Revolution	Nintendo	●●○
Project H.A.M.M.E.R.	Nintendo	●●○
Project Treasure Island Z*	Capcom	●●○
Ratatouille	THQ	●●○
Rayman Raving Rabbids 2	Ubisoft	●●○
Resident Evil 4: Wii Edition	Capcom	●●○
Resident Evil: Umbrella Cronicles	Capcom	●●○
Samurai Slash*	Koei	●●○
Scarface: The World Is Yours	Sierra	●●○
Shrek the Third	Activision	●●○
The Sims 2: Pets	Electronic Arts	●●○
Soul Calibur: Legends	Namco Bandai	●○○
Space Station Tycoon	Namco Bandai	●●○
Spider-Man 3	Activision	●●●
Super Mario Galaxy	Nintendo	●●○
Super Smash Bros. Brawl	Nintendo	●●○
Surf's Up	Ubisoft	●●●
Tamagotchi: Party On!	Namco Bandai	●●●
Transformers: The Game	Activision	●●○
World Championship Poker: All In	Crave	●●○
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008	THQ	●●○

NINTENDO DS

B-17: Fortress in the Sky	Destination	●○○
Biker Mice from Mars	American Game Factory	●○○
Bratz Ponyz	American Game Factory	●●○
Brothers in Arms DS	Ubisoft	●●○
Build a Bear	American Game Factory	●●○
California Games	System 3	●●○
Cameltry	TBA	●●○
Chibi-Robo: Park Patrol	Nintendo	●●○
Chicken Shoot	Destination	●●○
Chronos Twin	Lexicon	●●○
Cookie & Cream	Agetec	●●●
Crash of the Titans	Sierra	●●○
Death, Jr. and the Science Fair of Doom	Konami	●●●
Digimon World: Dawn	Namco Bandai	●●○
Digimon World: Dusk	Namco Bandai	●●○
Diner Dash	Eidos	●●●
DK: Jungle Climber	Nintendo	●●○
Dragon Ball Z: Harukanaru Densetsu	Atari	●●○
Dragon Quest IX*	Square Enix	●●○
Drake & Josh	THQ	●○○
DS Air*	Nintendo	●●○
Dynasty Warriors DS: Fighter's Battle	Koei	●●○
Etrian Odyssey	Atlus	●●●
Europa Universalis II	Pocket PC	●●○
Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer	2K Games	●●○
Ferrari Challenge	System 3	●○○
Final Fantasy XII: Revenant Wings	Square Enix	●●○
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Ring of Fates	Square Enix	●●○
Flipper Critters	Ignition	●●○
Fullmetal Alchemist Trading Card Game	Destineer	●●○
Geometry Wars: Galaxies	Sierra	●●○
The Golden Compass	Sega	●○○
GoPets	Konami	●●○
Harry Potter and The Order of the Phoenix	Electronic Arts	●●○
Heroes of Mana	Square Enix	●●○
Hoshigami Remix	Aksys	●●○
Impossible Mission	System 3	●●○
Indiana Jones 2007*	LucasArts	●○○
Jam Sessions	Ubisoft	●●○
Legend of the River King*	Natsume	●○○
The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass	Nintendo	●●○
Legends of the Indy 500	Destineer	●●○
Line Rider	inXile	●○○
Looney Tunes: Duck Amuck	Warner Bros. Interactive	●●○
Luminous Arc	Atlus	●●○
M&M's Break 'Em	Destination	●●○
Mega Man Star Force	Capcom	●●○
Mega Man ZX Advent	Capcom	●●○
Namco Museum DS	Namco Bandai	●●○
Nanostray 2	TBD	●●○
Naruto: Ninja Council 3	D3PA	●●○
Nervous Brickdown	Eidos	●●○
New York Times Crosswords	Majesco	●●●
Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword	Tecmo	●●○
Panzer Tactics DS*	CDV Software	●●○
Pet Alien	American Game Factory	●●○
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Trials and Tribulations	Capcom	●●○
Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End	Disney Interactive	●●●
Planet Puzzle League	Nintendo	●●●
Pony Friends	Eidos	●●●
Puzzle de Harvest Moon	Natsume	●●○
Ratatouille	THQ	●●○
Rune Factory: A Fantasy Harvest Moon	Natsume	●●○
Shrek the Third	Activision	●●○
SimCity DS	Electronic Arts	●●○
Sonic Rush Adventure	Sega	●●○
Spy-Q	Eidos	●●○
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	LucasArts	●○○
Surf's Up	Ubisoft	●●●
Tank Beat	03	●●○
Touch the Dead	Eidos	●●●
Touchmaster	Midway	●●○
Transformers: Autobots	Activision	●●○
Transformers: Decepticons	Activision	●●○
Turn it Around	Majesco	●●○
Ultimate Brain Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Card Games	Telegames	●●○
Undercover: Dual Motives	Anaconda	●○○
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008	THQ	●●○
Zendoku	Eidos	●●○
Zoey 101	THQ	●○○

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

Backyard Football 2007	Atari	●○○
Foodfight!	Global Star	●●○
Ratatouille	THQ	●●○

GAME BOY ADVANCE

Crash of the Titans	Sierra	●●○
Foodfight!	Global Star	●●○
Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix	Electronic Arts	●●○
Hugo: Bukkazoom	Namco Bandai	●●○
Metal Slug	SNK	●●○
Petz Vet	Ubisoft	●●●
Pirate Battle	Orbital	●●○
Ratatouille	THQ	●●○
Shrek the Third	Activision	●●○
Spider-Man 3	Activision	●●●
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Puzzle Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Table Games	Telegames	●●○

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* tentative title

BITS OF TID

Extended Forecast

Nintendo announces a handful of release dates.

Nintendo has revealed a partial list of its software lineup for the third quarter. They've provided release dates for a number of previously announced titles, as well as a new name for the DS follow-up to DK: King of Swing, and news that Picross DS is coming to the US. Please note that this is not the complete lineup: we expect some other big-name titles to hit during the same time period.

7-30
- Picross DS

9-10
- DK: Jungle Climber

9-24
- Battalion Wars 2
- Chibi-Robo: Park Patrol

Live Makes the Leap

NBA Live 08 is officially announced for Wii.

EA recently revealed that their popular NBA Live franchise is on its way to Wii this year. Details are still scarce, but the game is said to feature Washington Wizards all-star Gilbert Arenas as its cover athlete.

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Wii Channels

Games Take Center Stage

Wii Channels evolves this month to include our "featured pick" among the monthly Virtual Console offerings.

CHANNEL CHANGES:

- The new and improved Internet Channel is available for free at Wii Shop Channel until June 30. The Opera-powered browser now features enhanced zooming and scrolling functionality and an integrated search engine.

13
Games

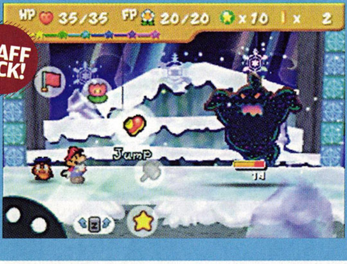
VIRTUAL CONSOLE

WHAT'S NEW IN RETRO GAMING!

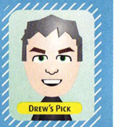
VIRTUAL CONSOLE FEATURED PICK

PAPER MARIO

STAFF PICK!

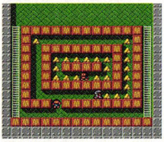


Platform: **N64**
Publisher: **Nintendo**
Genre: **RPG**
Original Release: **2001**



DREW'S PICK

The idea seemed bizarre—even lame—at the time: a 2.5-D Mario-themed RPG populated with 2-D "paper" characters and played on a console known primarily for its 3-D graphics. In the hands of developer Intelligent Systems, however, the standard Bowser-kidnaps-Peach storyline came to life with engaging dialogue, surprising characters, and addictive gameplay. Even people who avoid traditional RPGs should give the game a try—the turn-based battles always seem fresh and fun thanks to the integration of attack moves from the platforming genre.

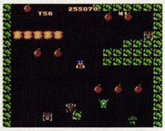


BATTLE LODE RUNNER

Platform: **TurboGrafx16**
Publisher: **Hudson**
Genre: **Action/Puzzle**
Original Release: **1993**

WHAT: The treasure-grabbing, hole-drilling computer classic got a Bombermanlike facelift for its 16-bit debut. It features plenty of traditional puzzle stages plus a versus mode.

WHY: The simple yet challenging gameplay gets addictive quickly, and this is the first time the game's been released in the US. —**CH**

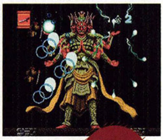


MIGHTY BOMB JACK

Platform: **NES**
Publisher: **Tecmo**
Genre: **Action**
Original Release: **1987**

WHAT: Originally an arcade game, Mighty Bomb Jack made the jump to the NES, bringing simple gameplay mechanics but plenty of difficulty—just like an arcade game.

WHY: You find solace in making thousands of difficult jumps, wearing a lame costume, and conquering a seemingly endless supply of levels. —**PM**



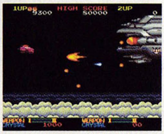
NINJA SPIRIT

STAFF PICK!

Platform: **TurboGrafx16**
Publisher: **Hudson**
Genre: **Action**
Original Release: **1990**

WHAT: All of the ninja action you could want in a video game that wasn't Ninja Gaiden.

WHY: Imagine if Legend of Kage were remade for a more powerful platform and you essentially have Ninja Spirit. The graphics are clean and sharp and the controls are finely tuned. —**GV**



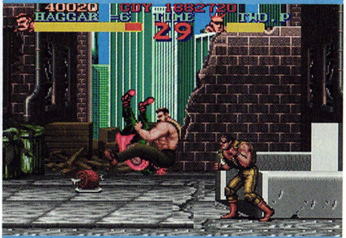
ORDYNE

Platform: **TurboGrafx16**
Publisher: **Hudson**
Genre: **Shooter**
Original Release: **1988**

WHAT: A side-scrolling, Scramble-style shooter with cartoonlike graphics and upgradable weapons.

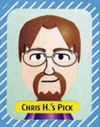
WHY: You can witness the majesty of rocket-propelled turtles bursting through the clouds and giant porpoises frolicking in the sky near spaceships . . . before they kill you. —**DW**

VIRTUAL CONSOLE SPOTLIGHT



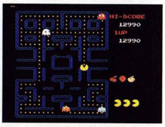
FINAL FIGHT

Platform: **Super NES**
Publisher: **Capcom**
Genre: **Action**
Original Release: **1991**



STAFF PICK!

There's a reason why other side-scrolling beat-'em-ups are called Final Fight clones—because this is the game that sets the standard in its genre. It might not feature all the content of the arcade version (it's only a single-player game, among other omissions), but the SNES version looks and sounds great, and the collision and character reactions are spot-on. Plus, you're a wrestling mayor who eats BBQ out of trash cans.



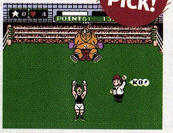
PAC-MAN

Platform: **NES**
Publisher: **Namco**
Genre: **Action**
Original Release: **1993**

WHAT: The '80s pop-culture icon that inspired T-shirts, albums, and, of course, about a billion ports.

WHY: The original Pac-Man is simple fun no matter what system you play it on. I prefer Ms. Pac-Man myself, but if you're itching to play the ultimate retro arcade game, you might as well play it on Virtual Console. —**AM**

STAFF PICK!

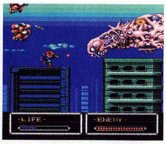


PUNCH-OUT!!
FEATURING MR. DREAM

Platform: **NES**
Publisher: **Nintendo**
Genre: **Sports**
Original Release: **1990**

WHAT: Classic boxing action through three circuits, leading up to the ultimate bout with Mr. Dream.

WHY: Unlike the 1987 version of Punch-Out!!, you can't fight Mike Tyson; but otherwise the gameplay is identical to the original, which is arguably the best boxing game ever made. —**AM**



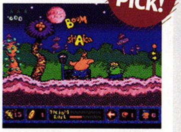
SHOCKMAN

Platform: **TurboGrafx16**
Publisher: **Hudson**
Genre: **Action**
Original Release: **1992**

WHAT: This challenging action-packed side-scroller is clearly cut from the Mega Man cloth. Intense shooter stages add some much-appreciated variety.

WHY: It may cover familiar ground, but it does it well. Shockman also has something console Mega Man games never did: co-op gameplay. —**CH**

STAFF PICK!

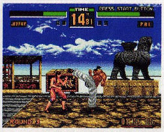


TOEJAM & EARL IN PANIC ON FUNKOTRON

Platform: **Sega Genesis**
Publisher: **Sega**
Genre: **Platformer**
Original Release: **1993**

WHAT: The funky alien duo returns for a wacky side-scroller set on their home planet.

WHY: Panic on Funkotron takes a lot of flak for eschewing the first game's unique formula in favor of a more-traditional approach, but it's still a fun, attractive platformer. —**ST**



VIRTUA FIGHTER 2

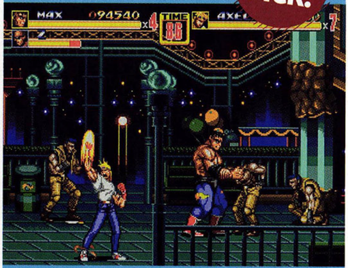
Platform: **Sega Genesis**
Publisher: **Sega**
Genre: **Fighting**
Original Release: **1996**

WHAT: Sega's top fighting series comes to the Genesis with most of the characters from the arcade version (there's no Lion or Shun Di) of the game except, now they're 2-D instead of polygonals.

WHY: Sega tried its very best to get the Virtua Fighter formula up and running on a system it had no business being on. —**GV**

VIRTUAL CONSOLE SPOTLIGHT

STAFF PICK!

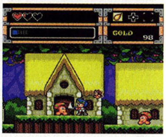


STREETS OF RAGE 2

Steve's Pick

Platform: **Sega Genesis**
Publisher: **Sega**
Genre: **Action**
Original Release: **1992**

What a month for beat-'em-ups. Between this and Final Fight, you'll be pummeling street punks and eating discarded foodstuffs to your heart's content. Both titles are pinnacles of the genre, but Streets of Rage 2 offers more playable characters, more levels, a two-player co-op mode, and a kickin' Yuzo Koshiro soundtrack. Plus, it's been a lot more difficult to get your hands on Streets of Rage 2 because Sega hasn't included it in any of the US releases of their recent classics compilations.



WONDER BOY IN MONSTER WORLD

Platform: **Sega Genesis**
Publisher: **Sega**
Genre: **Adventure**
Original Release: **1991**

WHAT: A side-scrolling adventure game featuring enemies as exciting as the game's name would imply. RPG elements help spruce up this entry into Sega's long-running (and confusingly named) Wonder Boy series.

WHY: Check out many brow-raising similarities to Zelda II, including misleading dialog and weird event triggers. —**CS**

A variety of third-party games prove that Wii and DS know no bounds.

Counter Force Pg. 31
Dewy's Adventure Pg. 26
Dynasty Warriors DS: Fighter's Battle Pg. 28
Fullmetal Alchemist Trading Card Game Pg. 30
Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix Pg. 29
Hoshigami Remix: Ruining Blue Earth Pg. 30
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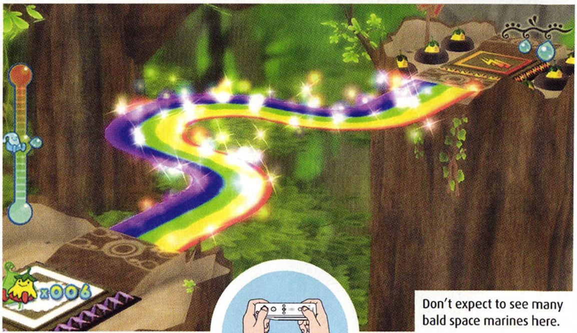
Liquid Courage

>DEWY'S ADVENTURE

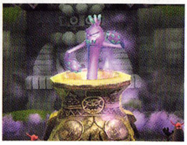
PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: KONAMI
DEVELOPER: KONAMI • RELEASE: FALL 2007

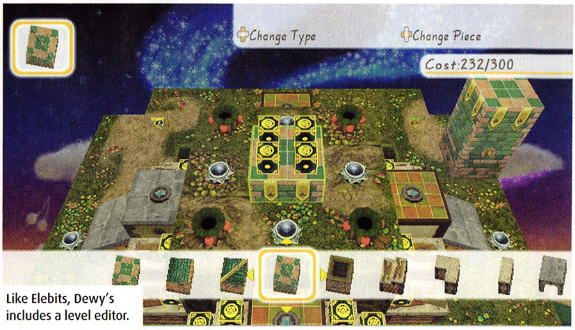
Konami's Elebits may have received mixed reviews, but the company deserves credit for trying something new and for building a game from the ground up specifically for Wii. The folks responsible for that title are bringing the same spirit of innovation to their latest project, a 3-D platformer entitled Dewy's Adventure. The game feels quite unlike anything else in the genre, and it starts with the way you move the titular hero. By tilting the Wii remote, you control the pitch and yaw of the game's world (much like in Super Monkey Ball: Banana Blitz) rather than Dewy himself. This unique interface changes the nature of traditional platforming challenges and opens up all sorts of possibilities for new ones. Additionally, you can alter Dewy's temperature with the press of a button, transforming the sentient water droplet into a block of ice or a steam cloud. Each form has its own abilities and weaknesses that figure heavily into how you combat enemies and tackle certain obstacles. As ice, Dewy can freeze ponds and perform a powerful three-hit jump attack, but he can't leap as high as in his default water form, and he slides around the environment with far less precision. In cloud form, Dewy hovers safely over the heads of most enemies and can zap objects with bolts of lightning. Since he's floating above the ground, however, he won't move when you tilt the controller. These considerations are put to especially good use during the game's imaginative boss encounters. When battling a giant lizard, for example, you must freeze the ground at the right moment to make the reptile's tongue stick to the ice.

Judging by what we've played thus far, Dewy's Adventure holds tremendous promise. It's possibly the most charming game this side of Klonoa (when you rescue your friends scattered throughout each level, they'll occasionally exclaim, "Bless you!" in their adorably squeaky voices), and the visuals impress thanks to some nice lighting, normal mapping, and depth-of-field effects. Getting accustomed to the controls does take a while and parts of our preview build were fairly frustrating, but the developers have plenty of time to work out the kinks. Let's hope they succeed, because all of the pieces are in place for a memorable, thoroughly original Wii experience. —STEVE T.



Don't expect to see many bald space marines here.





Like Elebits, Dewy's includes a level editor.

On the Air

>MEGA MAN STAR FORCE

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM • RELEASE: AUGUST 2007

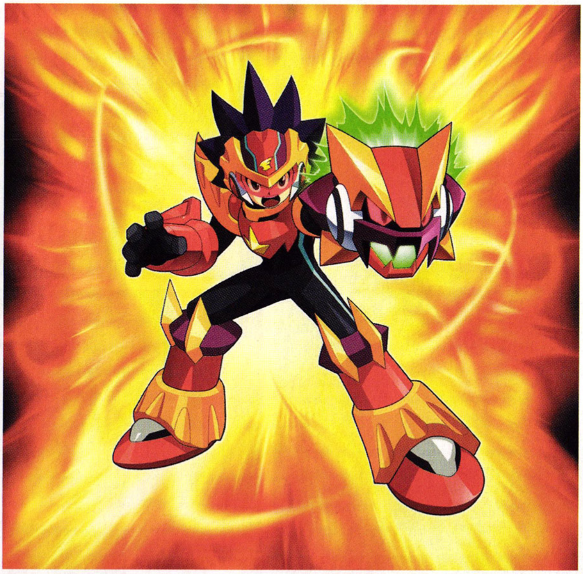
It is the year 220X. The world has evolved significantly since the events of the Mega Man Battle Network games. No longer do you need to physically "jack in" to the Internet and electronic devices; Mega Man Star Force is based on an era of wireless technology and electromagnetic (EM) pulses, where everyone wears a mobile "Transer" terminal on their arm to instantly communicate with anyone at any time.

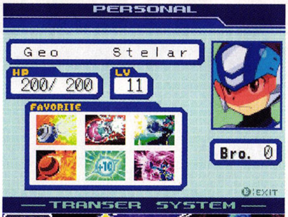
It's in this world that players take control of Geo Stelar, a boy who's distanced himself from others ever since his father disappeared along with the space station *Peace* three years previous. Geo's life takes a dramatic turn, however, when he encounters an alien named Omega-Xis—Mega for short—and the two gain the ability to merge into Mega Man form and travel the EM pathways of the Wave World. Together, Geo and Mega will fight a race of evil beings from the far-off planet FM.

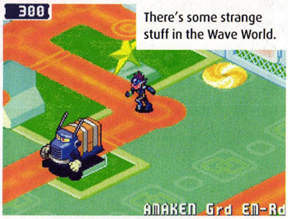
Although the story and specifics are different, the action-RPG gameplay of Star Force is a lot like that of Battle Network. You'll still get to explore the real world as a human and the virtual world as Mega Man, and you'll still get to interact with other characters to gain info and advance the story. You'll also still get pulled into loads of random battles against enemy viruses, but instead of watching the combat from a side view, you'll fight from a behind-the-back perspective on a three-by-five grid. A touch-screen interface lets you select special abilities and weapons like cannons, swords, and explosive balls from a deck of Battle Cards, and you can use the B Button to attack with your basic hand cannon, which comes with built-in rapid fire. One particularly convenient new feature is the ability to lock onto distant enemies, which allows you to quickly dash forward and smite foes that would otherwise be out of range.

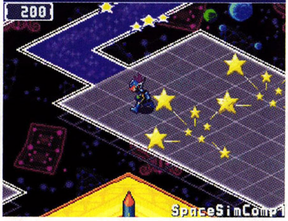
Since wireless communication is a major theme of Star Force, it's no surprise that the game involves making friends and interacting with them over EM waves. As part of the coming-of-age story, you'll help Geo overcome his introversion and make friends to form a Brother Band—a network of allies that Geo relies upon to gain key items and abilities. You'll be able to form a real-life Brother Band with other players over Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection as well, which will give you access to your Brothers' favorite Battle Cards. You can also battle or trade cards over a local wireless connection.

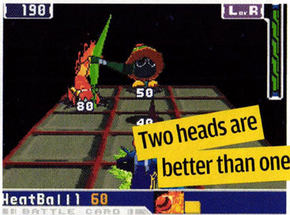
To top it off, Star Force is arriving in three separate versions: Leo, Dragon, and Pegasus (each named after a different satellite in the game world). Every version offers different powered-up elemental transformations for Mega Man (Fire Leo, Green Dragon, or Ice Pegasus), different Star Force Big Bang super attacks, and unique Battle Cards. Any way you look at it, that's a whole lot of Mega Man. —CHRIS H.

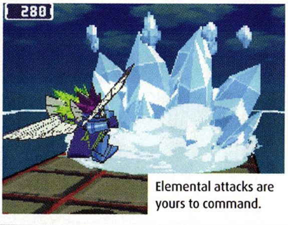


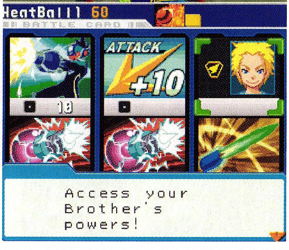



There's some strange stuff in the Wave World.




Two heads are better than one!


Elemental attacks are yours to command.



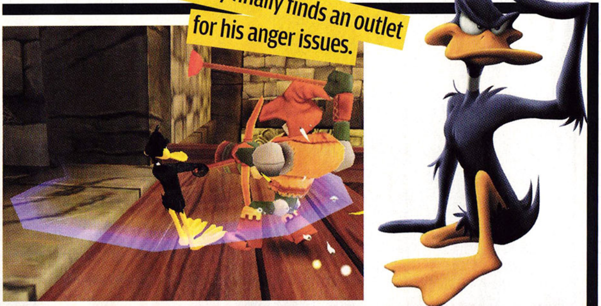
Access your Brother's powers!

Armed and Looney

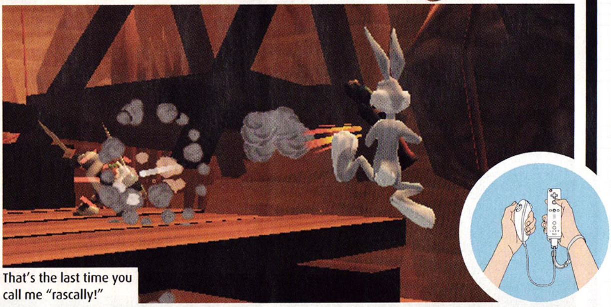
>LOONEY TUNES: ACME ARSENAL

PLATFORM: Wii • PUBLISHER: WARNER BROS. INTERACTIVE
DEVELOPER: RED TRIBE • RELEASE: FALL 2007

The latest Looney Tunes title brings the cast of cartoon crazies to Wii and arms them to the teeth for some all-out mayhem. Acme Arsenal takes characters from all over the Looney Tunes universe on an adventure through time to stop a classic villain, the Mad Scientist, from erasing their ancestors' existence (using an Acme eraser, of course). But Acme Arsenal is far from your typical cartoon platformer—it's an action game to the core, with projectile weapons (including a rocket launcher), melee weapons (like Bugs's banjo), and a wide variety of enemies to try them out on. Many of the game's locales will be familiar to fans, but the overall vibe is quite different from any previous Looney Tunes foray thanks to the all-new, beefed-up character designs (created by the animators of the cartoon series especially for this game). The Wii version of Acme Arsenal will use the nunchuk for movement, while gestures with the Wii remote execute spin attacks and smash attacks. And it can all be done with a friend in co-op mode. The cartoon carnage kicks off this fall. —ANDY M.



Daffy finally finds an outlet for his anger issues.



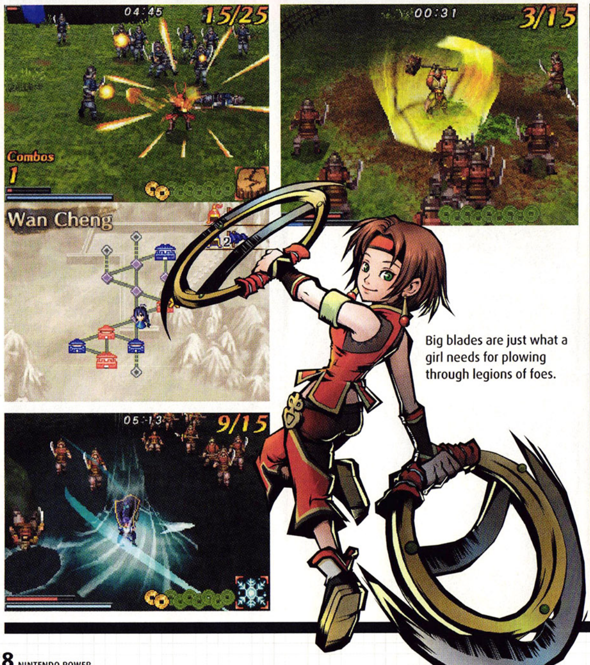
That's the last time you call me "rascally!"

Cut the Deck

>DYNASTY WARRIORS DS: FIGHTER'S BATTLE

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: KOEI
DEVELOPER: KOEI • RELEASE: JULY 2007

Though cards and decks play a part in Koei's set in Anchient China, DS battler, Dynasty Warriors: Fighter's Battle is not a static strategy game by any stretch of the imagination; it's action through and through. The game's 120 cards come into play when your character (the Phoenix, the Dragon, or the Chimera) selects his allies from established Dynasty Warriors, along with dynamic new power-ups. Then it's off to the battle. The 12 stages include fields, towns, and a sailing ship. Each location is loaded with traps, but the real danger comes from enemy hordes that keep attacking with relentless resolve. As you hold your ground against the baddies, normal slicing moves give way to supercharged Musou attacks (once you've built up enough energy) and Obstacle attacks (once you've collected enough coins from fallen enemies). A roulette wheel determines the nature of the obstacles that fall from the sky. Once you've earned cards by tearing through the single-player adventure, you can test their powers in local wireless matches for up to three DW enthusiasts. —GEORGE S.



Big blades are just what a girl needs for plowing through legions of foes.

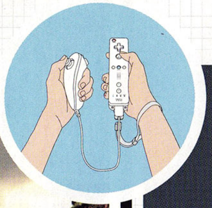
Harry Gets a Wii Wand

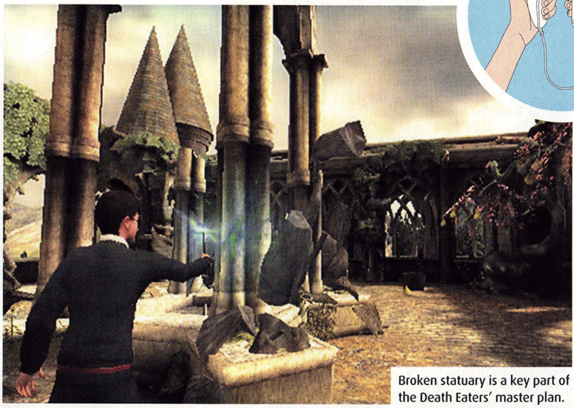
>HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX

PLATFORM: Wii (Also on DS, GBA)
PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts • DEVELOPER: EA UK
RELEASE: June 2007

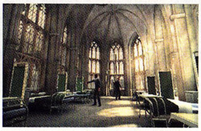
No divination spell is required to suss out the primary gameplay mechanic for the new Harry Potter game. The Wii remote is a natural stand-in for for a wizard's wand, so it's easy for fans to imagine throwing down with Draco Malfoy on the cobblestone courtyards of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. But they may be surprised to learn that the wand is central to nearly *everything* you do in the game. While there is plenty of magical combat in Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, EA UK has placed the emphasis firmly on exploration. You'll find that the Wingardium Leviosa charm—used to lift heavy objects—gets a much bigger workout than any of the jinxes used in duels. Nearly every object in Hogwarts is interactive, from broken items that need a simple Reparo spell to complex puzzles that can transform the environment for the rest of the game. To cast a spell, you highlight an object or character using a cursor then execute a movement with the Wii remote to make the magic happen. It's in your interest to examine each object you come across, because virtually everything you do will earn you Discovery Points that upgrade your spells and unlock rewards—such as interviews with actors from the movie—in a special room.

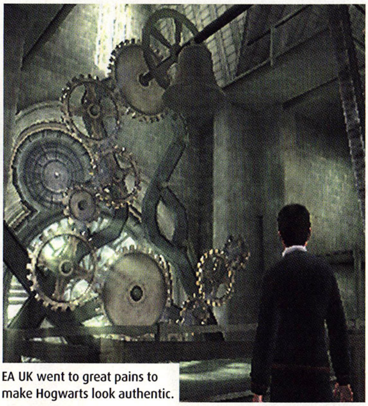
Of course, there's plenty to do besides explore the pretty, open environments. The game follows the plot of of the book (and, lest we forget, the gazillion-dollar movie) from Privet Drive to Hogwarts to the Ministry of Magic as Harry moves five-sevenths of the way to his ultimate confrontation with Lord Whatshisname. Before it's all over, you'll play as Sirius Black, Dumbledore, and Fred and George Weasley, in addition to the eponymous star of the series. The meat of the game involves Harry and company assembling Dumbledore's Army (D.A.), a crew of 28 trusted wizardry students who join together to learn Defense Against the Dark Arts techniques. You need to track down every member of the D.A., then help them with tasks so they'll join you in the Room of Requirement, where the gang can slather on some bubotuber pus while they wait for the big fight against the Death Eaters. Okay, the pus part is an exaggeration, but magical acne cream may be the only thing left out of the game. Order of the Phoenix producer Jonathan Bunney promises that fans of the series will find piles of Easter eggs within the game if they've obsessively retained every detail from the books. There might be a few people out there who obsess over these books, right? —Drew W.



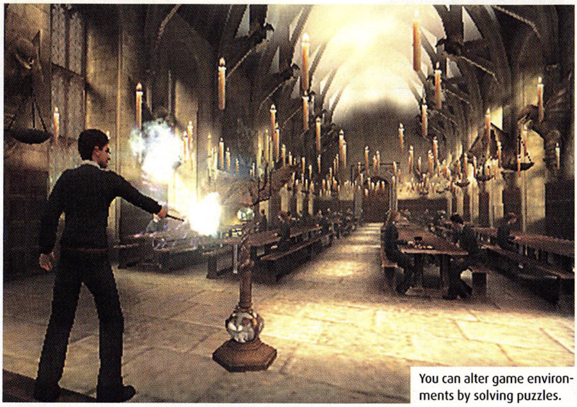


Broken statuary is a key part of the Death Eaters' master plan.





EA UK went to great pains to make Hogwarts look authentic.



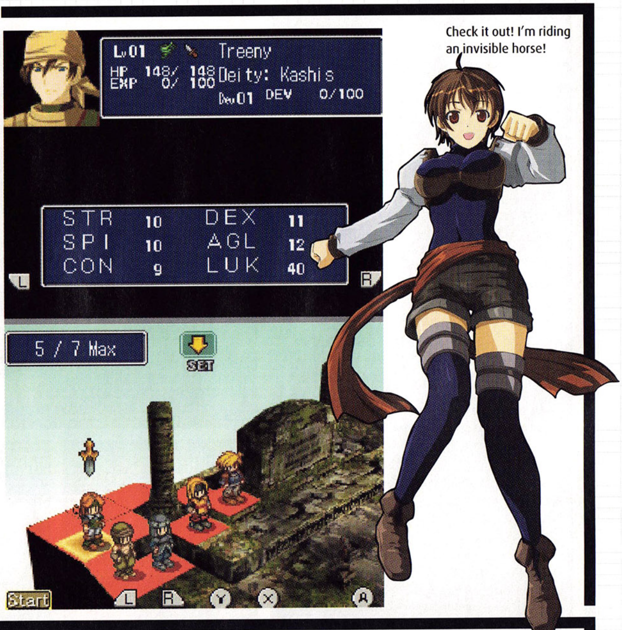
You can alter game environments by solving puzzles.

Battle Tactics

>HOSHIGAMI REMIX: RUINING BLUE EARTH

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: Aksys Games
DEVELOPER: ArcSystemWorks • RELEASE: June 2007

We know some of you have been starving for another FINAL FANTASY Tactics-style game to emerge on a portable Nintendo platform. Hoshigami Remix should satiate your hunger. It uses a battle system nearly identical to that in Tactics and lets you move several units on a 3-D battlefield via a turn-based system. However, Hoshigami is different from Tactics in that you have an overall amount of "energy" you can use per turn, so if you try to move a unit several spots toward an enemy, you'll have no energy for an attack. If you attack an enemy that's a little closer, you leave more energy to attack or cast magic. It adds a whole new layer of strategy to an already heavily strategic experience. On top of all that, there are different character types—some can perform devastating magic attacks while others specialize in hand-to-hand fighting, but all of them can level up over the course of the game. And they'll need to. Hoshigami Remix will give you a serious challenge. —Giancarlo V.



Lv01 Treeny
HP 148/ 148 Deity: Kashis
EXP 0/ 100
Dv01 DEV 0/100

STR	10	DEX	11
SPI	10	AGL	12
CON	9	LUK	40

5 / 7 Max

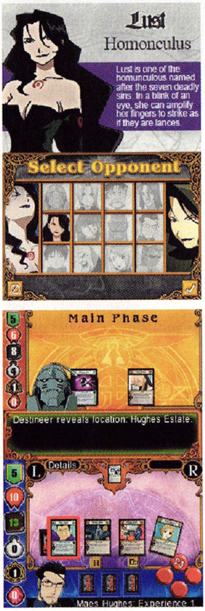
Check it out! I'm riding an invisible horse!

Chemistry Class

>FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST TRADING CARD GAME

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: Destineer
DEVELOPER: Magellan • RELEASE: June 2007

You know that an anime hit is on the rise when it gets its own trading card game and a DS adaptation. *Fullmetal Alchemist* climbs to that rung on the phenomenon ladder with a title that accommodates both single players (in a story-based string of card-game battles) and up to four players (in local-wireless and Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection-enabled matches). After choosing a leader from any of 12 *FMA* characters, you recruit allies from your deck, suit up your combatants with item and weapon cards, then send them out in search of clues to the location of the elusive Philosopher's Stone. Your inevitable clashes with rivals for Clue Points involve comparisons of strength, wits, and your powers of alchemy. The battler with the highest modified values of the trait in contention walks away with the prize. Card manipulation is handled through touch control on the bottom screen while the top screen offers information about characters and cards. If you don't want to play through the single-player game to unlock new cards, you can engage in single matches using a fantasy deck that includes every card in the Premier and Blood & Water collections in addition to a DS-exclusive bonus card. —George S.



Lust
Homonculus
Lust is one of the homunculous named after the seven deadly sins. In a blink of an eye, she can amplify her fingers to strike as if they are lances.

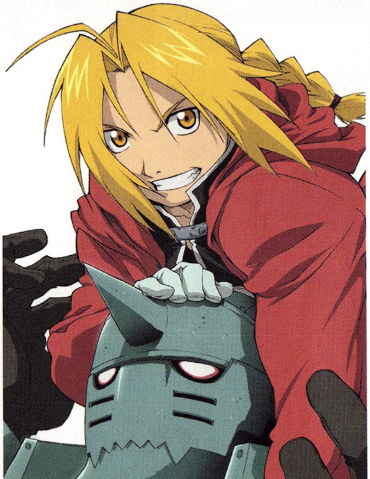
Select Opponent

Main Phase

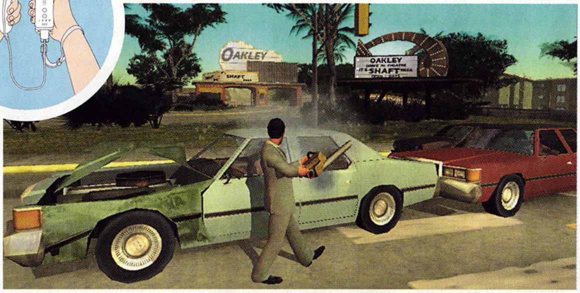
Destineer reveals location: Hughes Estate.

Details

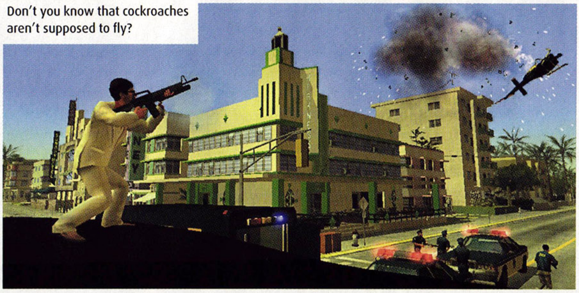
Maes Hughes Experience 1



The Elric brothers are card-battling fiends.


OAKLEY
OAKLEY
SHAFT

Don't you know that cockroaches aren't supposed to fly?



Say Hello to My Wii Friend

>SCARFACE: THE WORLD IS YOURS

PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **Sierra**
DEVELOPER: **Radical Ent.** • RELEASE: **June 2007**

Tony Montana lives! Scarface: The World Is Yours picks up during the climactic gunfight from the end of the 1983 film, but rather than watch Tony meet an untimely demise, you help the Cuban drug lord blast his way out of the mansion and make his escape. From there, it's a matter of reclaiming your empire and exacting revenge on your enemies in this Grand Theft Auto-style action-adventure.

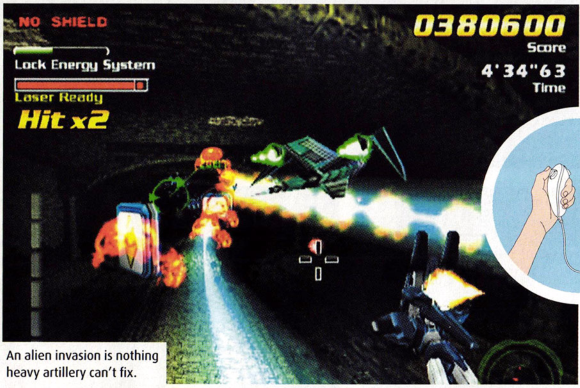
The Wii version of Scarface is a port of the game released for various other platforms last fall, but with the requisite control modifications. You move Tony with the nunchuk's analog stick and aim your weapon with the Wii remote. Flicking the nunchuk performs one of Tony's obscenity-laced taunts. Then there's the chainsaw; while holding the B Button, you simply swing the remote toward whichever limb you wish to liberate from your opponent's torso. Needless to say, this one's not for the kids. —Steve T.

Big Bangs

>COUNTER FORCE

PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **Conspiracy Entertainment**
DEVELOPER: **Hyper-Devbox** • RELEASE: **June 2007**

Counter Force is a pure throwback to classic twitch-heavy arcade-style shooters. The game lets you choose from three experimental robots (each with varying speed, firepower, and other stats) and throws you into 3-D autoscrolling flying-and-shooting action in a futuristic war-torn wasteland; from a gameplay standpoint, it's a lot like Sega's Space Harrier titles. While you maneuver your robot by moving the nunchuk or using the Control Stick, you'll point and fire at wave after wave of enemies with the Wii remote. In addition to standard attacks, you can lock onto enemies to unleash a flurry of missiles, fire a powerful megalaser that damages anything in its path, or activate a screen-clearing bombing run. By quickly moving the nunchuk to the side, you can use a defensive barrel roll to spin across the screen—essential for surviving the powerful bosses (which include a two-headed dragon and a mighty golem). The fight against the alien forces will take you to locales like ravaged cities and underground temples, and between stages you can purchase upgrades for your health, your shield, and more. If you're an old-school-shooter fan, you may want to set your sights on Counter Force. —Chris H.

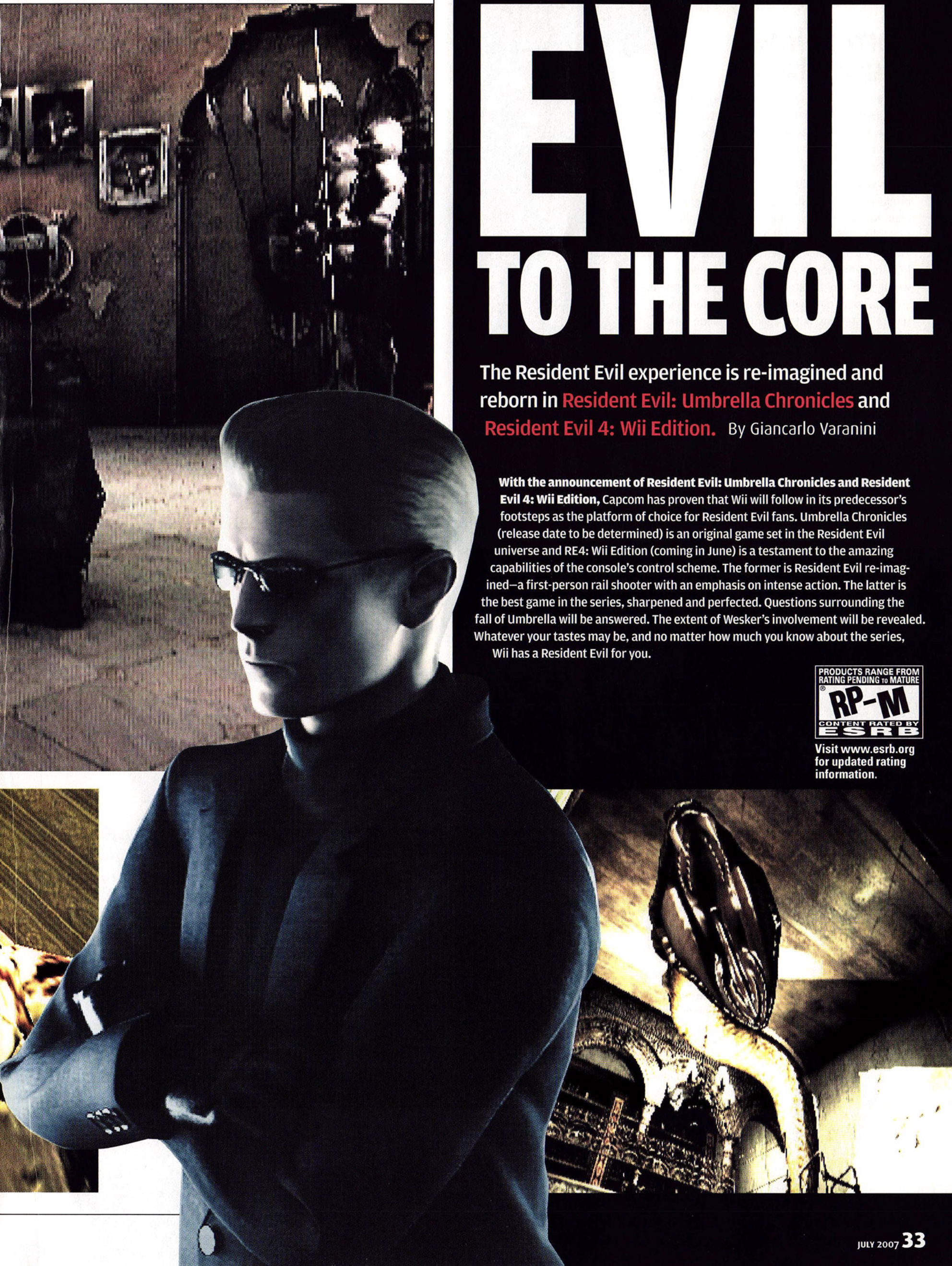

NO SHIELD
Lock Energy System
Laser Ready
Hit x2
0380600
Score
4'34"63
Time

An alien invasion is nothing heavy artillery can't fix.

NO SHIELD
Lock Energy System
Hit x2
0264850
Score
4'19"86
Time
358 1
Energy Gold Bomb
Energy

NO SHIELD
Lock Energy System
Megalaser Ready
0136750
Score
3'56"88
Time
338 2
Energy Gold Bomb
Energy

Warning: Your pants may or may not be scared off of you.



EVIL TO THE CORE

The Resident Evil experience is re-imagined and reborn in Resident Evil: Umbrella Chronicles and Resident Evil 4: Wii Edition.

By Giancarlo Varanini

With the announcement of Resident Evil: Umbrella Chronicles and Resident Evil 4: Wii Edition, Capcom has proven that Wii will follow in its predecessor's footsteps as the platform of choice for Resident Evil fans. Umbrella Chronicles (release date to be determined) is an original game set in the Resident Evil universe and RE4: Wii Edition (coming in June) is a testament to the amazing capabilities of the console's control scheme. The former is Resident Evil re-imagined—a first-person rail shooter with an emphasis on intense action. The latter is the best game in the series, sharpened and perfected. Questions surrounding the fall of Umbrella will be answered. The extent of Wesker's involvement will be revealed. Whatever your tastes may be, and no matter how much you know about the series, Wii has a Resident Evil for you.

PRODUCTS RANGE FROM RATING PENDING TO MATURE
RP–M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Visit www.esrb.org for updated rating information.

Chronicling Umbrella

Resident Evil: Umbrella Chronicles gives a whole new take on Resident Evil 0, the original Resident Evil, Resident Evil 2, and Resident Evil 3: Nemesis—sorry, Code Veronica fans. "Since we are focusing this game on the story of Umbrella's rise and fall, Code Veronica elements will not be included," says Umbrella Chronicles producer Masachika Kawata. However, there are also plans for new locations that focus specifically on Umbrella to fill in gaps in the overarching RE storyline. Two characters will represent each of the component RE games, and you can play as either depending on which portion of the storyline you're going through. New characters are planned for the never-before-seen Umbrella sections, but the game is still too early in development for Capcom to reveal those characters. In fact, it's not even known if the events in Umbrella Chronicles will unfold chronologically. "We are still thinking about the best way to present the game," Kawata explains. "But adding a more random element is something that is currently being considered."

Meet The Teams

Many of your favorites from past Resident Evil games return in Umbrella Chronicles. To refresh your memory, here are character bios from the original Resident Evil, Resident Evil 2, Resident Evil 3, and Resident Evil 0 games.

CHRIS REDFIELD

STARS ALPHA TEAM MEMBER

(Resident Evil)

The unofficial leader of the STARS Bravo Team, Chris Redfield helps lead the surviving members of his unit into the mansion located in the same forest where Rebecca Chambers's chopper went down. In the original Resident Evil, Chris was separated from the rest of the team and forced to take on the evil inside the mansion while looking for another missing team member, Albert Wesker.

BILLY COEN

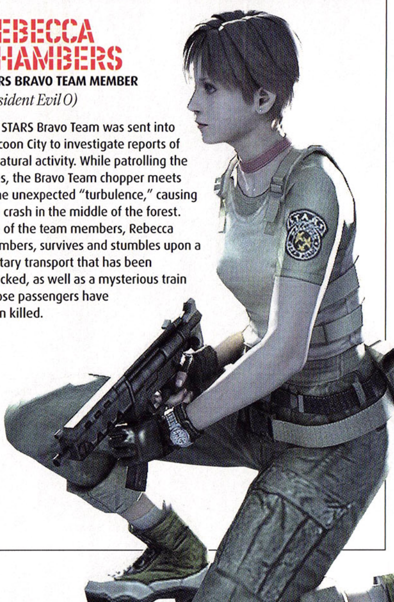
MARINE CORPS MEMBER, EX-PRISONER

(Resident Evil 0)

If his totally extreme, Mountain Dew tattoos didn't let you in on the secret, we will: Billy's a bit of a troublemaker. What got him in trouble isn't entirely clear, but we know that he served in the Marine Corps and was sent to his execution via military transport. The transport was unexpectedly attacked while driving through Raccoon City, allowing Billy to escape.

What About Wesker?

If you've played any Resident Evil game, you probably know who Albert Wesker is, but if you haven't, all you need to know is that he's one bad dude. The double-agent plays a significant role in Umbrella Chronicles, and we may even get to see what happens to him in the events transpiring before Resident Evil 4.



REBECCA CHAMBERS

STARS BRAVO TEAM MEMBER

(Resident Evil 0)

The STARS Bravo Team was sent into Raccoon City to investigate reports of unnatural activity. While patrolling the skies, the Bravo Team chopper meets some unexpected "turbulence," causing it to crash in the middle of the forest. One of the team members, Rebecca Chambers, survives and stumbles upon a military transport that has been attacked, as well as a mysterious train whose passengers have been killed.

Missing in Action

A few memorable characters (both good and bad) from the Resident Evil series are either not in the game or just haven't been shown yet since parts of the story are being re-worked.

JILL VALENTINE

STARS ALPHA TEAM MEMBER

(Resident Evil)

Much like Chris, Jill gets separated from most of Bravo Team after they enter the mansion, but she gets help throughout the early parts of the original Resident Evil thanks to Barry Burton, who always seems to be in the right place at the right time. Her mastery of lock picking may not be all that useful in Umbrella Chronicles since doors can be blown off their hinges.

LEON S. KENNEDY

RACCOON CITY POLICE OFFICER

(Resident Evil 2)

Leon was heading into Raccoon City to continue his career as a police officer, but as luck would have it, he arrives in town just as a mysterious virus takes hold of its residents, transforming them into packs of shambling zombies. Leon has to uncover the origins of the outbreak and make it out of the city alive.

CLAIRE REDFIELD

FREELOADING HIPPY

(Resident Evil 2)

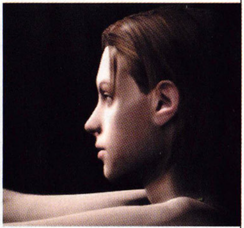
Claire makes her way to Raccoon City after learning that her brother, Chris Redfield, has gone missing. Of course, she also discovers that the town is overrun with zombies and that her only hope for survival is to team up with a young Raccoon City police officer named Leon S. Kennedy.

JILL VALENTINE

EX-STARS ALPHA TEAM MEMBER

(Resident Evil 3: Nemesis)

For some inexplicable reason, Jill's still in Raccoon City, which has come under the full control of the Umbrella Corporation. And yet again the city is overrun with zombies, forcing Jill to find a way out of town for good, only this time she has to worry about a 300-pound mutated freak following her.



CARLOS OLIVEIRA

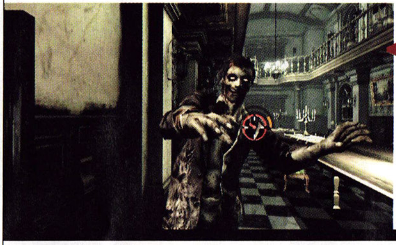
UBCS DELTA PLATOON MEMBER

(Resident Evil 3: Nemesis)

Jill's teammate in the Umbrella Chronicles portrayal of Resident Evil 3: Nemesis will be Carlos Oliveira, a member of the Umbrella Biohazard Countermeasure Service who helps Jill throughout RE3. His team is brought in to control and clean up the mess started in the original game.

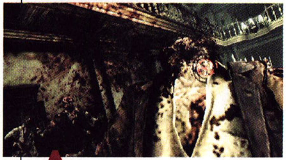
Re-Entering Raccoon City

At its core, Resident Evil: Umbrella Chronicles is an on-rails shooter, similar to Sega's House of the Dead games. "I have been involved in adventure games in the past," Kawata explains regarding the decision to shift genres. "[I] wanted to try and focus on a game with a more defined focus, like a shooter game. The game is essentially on rails, but it is not a traditional arcade gun-shooter since it was designed with the home console in mind." That focus on home-console design is apparent: you can move the camera in any direction by pressing the corresponding direction on the nunchuk's analog stick, which is helpful for spotting useful items, objects, or enemies that aren't in your immediate line of sight. Here's what else Umbrella Chronicles has in store.

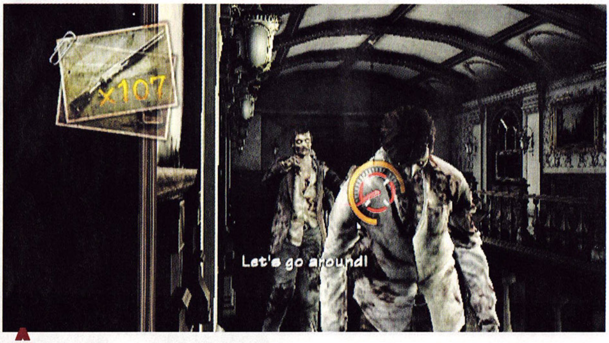


RELOAD!

Right next to this jolly-looking zombie is a targeting reticle; Just aim using the Wii remote and press B to shoot.The orange ring shows how many shots you have before you'll need to reload, but a simple shake of the Wii remote makes reloading quick and painless.



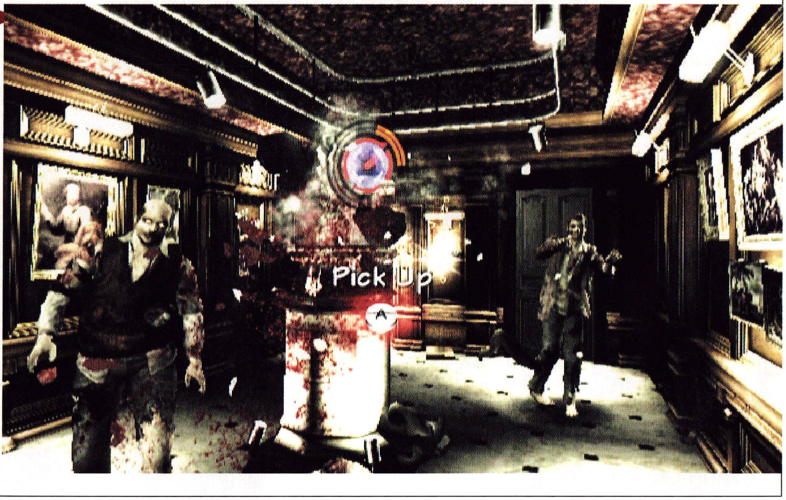
MAKE IT COUNT As everyone knows, the best way to kill zombies is to shoot them in the head. Firing at other parts of zombies won't prevent them from lurching toward you—you'll only slow them down. When they're close enough, they'll take a nice big bite out of your flesh and continue feasting unless you take them down.

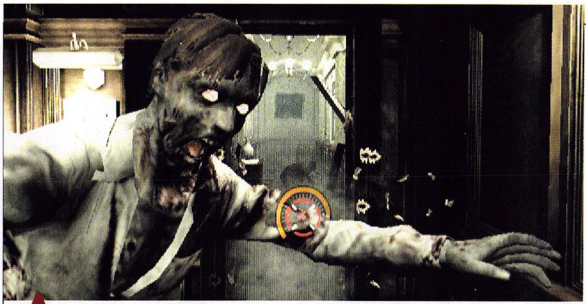


THE ARSENAL Selecting a weapon in Umbrella Chronicles is much easier than in previous RE games. And it's a good thing—the action moves so quickly that you need to have your weapons available right away. You need only to press up or down on the remote's control pad to cycle through the weapons shown in the upper-left corner of the screen. Currently there are shotguns and pistols available, but the development team plans to add grenades and other weapons from the series.

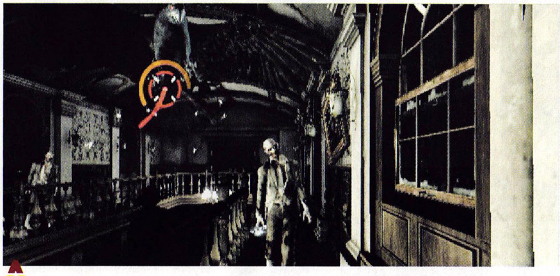
LOST AND FOUND

There's a ton of environmental interaction in Umbrella Chronicles. Shooting everything in sight isn't only possible—it's encouraged. Some objects, such as the famous water-carrying maiden statue from the original Resident Evil, contain health-restoring green herbs or new weapons. You can even shoot down all the paintings on the walls.

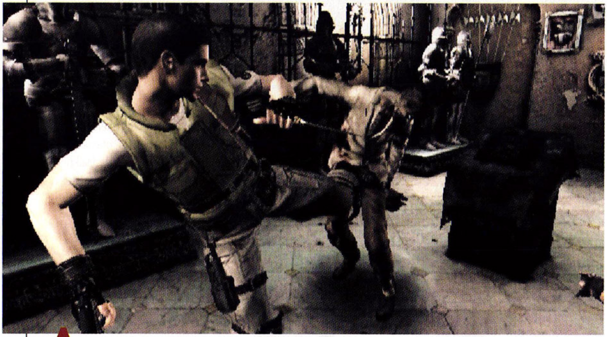




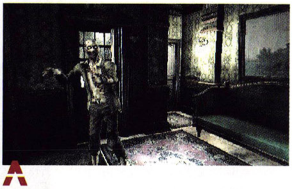
NO LOADING Remember the lengthy load time between rooms in the old Resident Evil games? It's not an issue in Umbrella Chronicles. Just blow those doors right off their hinges and walk through like the zombie-slaying hero you are.



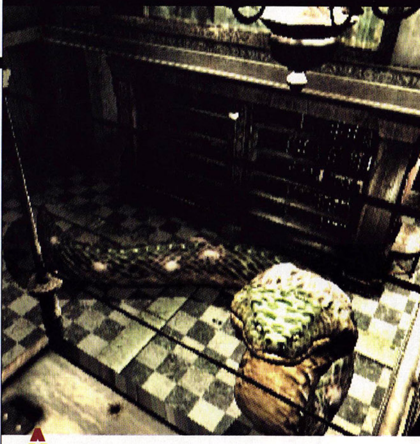
BLACKOUT There are some downsides to shooting everything around you. Taking out too many chandeliers or wall sconces can make a room incredibly dark, leaving only the moonlight streaming in through the windows. This makes it somewhat difficult to spot enemies, such as the raven targeted above, before they're within striking distance.



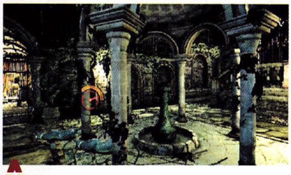
TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT Like in Resident Evil 4, if an enemy gets too close you can sometimes perform a melee attack to keep them from chewing on you. When a zombie gets uncomfortably near, the A Button icon flashes; when it does, press A to deliver an awesome karate kick to the zombie breadbasket.



RE-IMAGINED Remember this scene? It's the first time you encountered a zombie in the original Resident Evil. Umbrella Chronicles is filled with such moments, but it feels like you're seeing them for the first time thanks to the new perspective on the action and the fast-paced gameplay.



BATTLING BOSSES You won't just be fighting zombies throughout the entire game. Each part of the Resident Evil saga depicted in Umbrella Chronicles will have its own set of enemies and bosses, such as the crimson-head zombies and the giant snake from the Resident Evil remake. Maybe we'll even see Tyrant, one of the toughest bosses from the Resident Evil universe.



DECISIONS, DECISIONS Left or right? At various points in the game, you can take alternate paths to get to the final destination. The alternate paths aren't hidden; it will always be pretty clear when you have the opportunity to go through a different door.

Resident Evil 4: Wii Edition

Everything you know and love from the GameCube version of Resident Evil 4 is present in Wii Edition. The core content from the original remains intact, but the control scheme and extra content (from the PS2 version) are all new.

Deadly Accuracy

The successful translation from the standard controller to the Wii remote and nunchuk isn't shocking. The analog stick on the nunchuk controls movement while the remote controls the aiming. You press the nunchuk's trigger to aim and then press A to shoot. (It may sound a little awkward since it seems natural to fire with the trigger, but it becomes second nature after a few minutes.) Accessing your inventory, performing the 180-degree quick turn, and other functions are also just as easy as they were before.

The only hiccup in the new control scheme is that the aiming reticle moves independently of the camera. In the GCN version of Resident Evil 4, aiming would move both the reticle and the camera, making it easy to stay in a firing position while looking around for infected Ganado to shoot. In the Wii version, you have to keep moving the analog stick in the direction you want to look; otherwise Leon (and other playable characters) will just aim at what's in the immediate area. It's a bit of a pain at first, but the learning curve is short.

Ada takes aim in Resident Evil 4's new content.

The game's producer, Masachika Kawata, says there won't be an option to change the control scheme in any way. Given that, it's fortunate that the new controls make playing Resident Evil 4 only better. Aiming is much more precise than with the original scheme, and as a result it's easier to shoot sticks of dynamite, legs, and—more importantly—heads. Experts won't have any trouble plowing through the game.

The new Wii controls are a perfect fit for RE4.

A New Perspective

Both Assignment Ada and the Mercenaries mode—the GCN version's secondary content—are present in Wii Edition. And excitingly, so is the previously PlayStation 2-exclusive Separate Ways mode, which gives you a deeper look into Ada's role in the RE4 saga. Separate Ways spans several chapters, giving a different perspective on events that transpire throughout the game. It also provides new story information, particularly about Umbrella's involvement in the bacteria featured in Resident Evil 4. Best of all, this content wasn't ported from the PlayStation 2 game. The development team revamped the content based on the GameCube engine before bringing it over to Wii, which allowed for better lighting and textures.

The new content doesn't stop there, though. As you progress through Separate Ways, portions of Ada's report will be unlocked to provide even more background on some of the characters involved in the overall plot.

Wii Edition also introduces a brand-new unlockable weapon—the PRL 412—that you can use in the main game. This superpowerful gun can take down most enemies in a single blast. Lastly, there are some new costumes for Leon and Ashley—who dress up as a 1920s gangster and medieval knight, respectively. The armor actually protects Ashley, which makes escorting her to safety a little bit easier. It's a fun feature and one of many reasons to play RE4 again or for the first time.

Leon does his best Michael Jackson impersonation.

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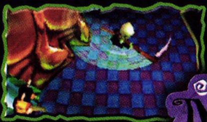

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Wii BROUGHT THE PARTY!!

Mario Party 8 cordially invites you to play a new batch of Wii-optimized minigames.

By Drew Williams

MARIO PARTY
EVERYONE
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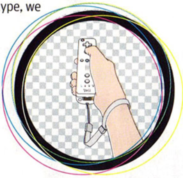
GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS

Even the most time-tested formula occasionally needs a little shake-up, and Mario Party 8 is getting one in the most literal sense. The addition of Wii motion controls to the title's minigames gives the enduring franchise a freshness it's been missing since at least Mario Party 4. There is a wide variety of control schemes in the game, but most of them fit into a handful of categories. For each control type, we offer you a representative sample of minigames. Time to start partying.

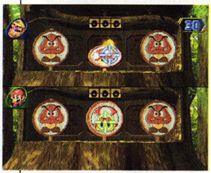


POINT AND CLICK

If you liked the Shooting Range game in Wii Play, then you'll love the following assortment of light-gun-style target games. Just point the Wii remote at the screen, take aim, and then press the B Button (or the A Button, if you prefer to shoot stuff with your thumb).

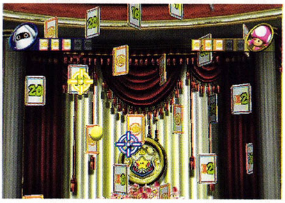
Lob to Rob

Enjoy the thrill of carnival-style beanbag games without the unseemly presence of leering, unwashed carnival folk. Target the Mushrooms for muchos points. Just be sure to avoid hitting the negative-value Goombas—they are evildoers who hate your freedom to earn points by tossing beanbags.



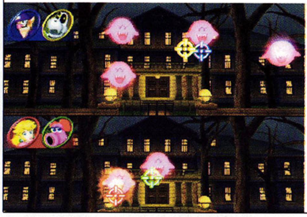
Aim of the Game

In Aim of the Game, you must search through flipping cards as they gently scroll down the screen then pick the ones with the greatest value. You get only five picks, so be patient and make them count.



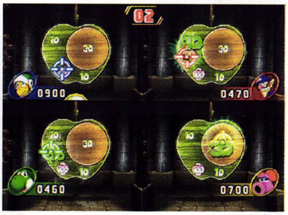
Boo-ting Gallery

Grab a partner and start Boo-bustin'! This split-screen rail shooter pits two teams against each other in a race to exorcise three discrete Boo-infested areas. One team gets to leave. The other team has to stay in the house forever! Bwahaha!



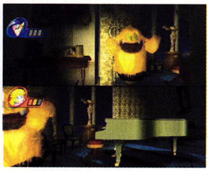
Snipe for the Picking

Regular targets are soooo boring, don't you think? Why do the same spots always yield the greatest number of points? In Snipe for the Picking, you must locate the random 100-point areas on flipping, apple-shaped targets to ensure a win.



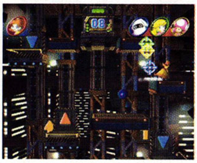
Specter Inspector

Two contestants must race through a haunted house with a flashlight to uncover hidden characters. The first player to find three characters wins. It's a lot of fun. Maybe someday someone will make a whole game that involves wandering through a haunted house with a flashlight.



Gun the Runner

It hardly seems fair, but this game forces one player to navigate platforms while the other three players fire balls at him to slow him down. Look for the cool Shy Guy helicopter at the beginning of the game. (It's shaped like a Bullet Bill and has arms on it.)

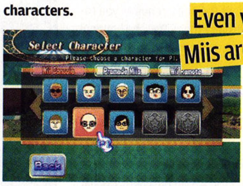


FAMILIAR FACES

R.S.V.P. Mii

Let's say you've already retired your more-athletic Miis to the Wii Sports hall of fame and the others are Wii Play-ed out. Are they getting lonely back in the plaza? Take 'em to the party! You can use your Mii to identify your game file and they also pop up in the Extras Zone as playable characters.

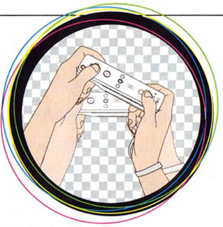
Even your Miis are invited!



PERSONALIZED PARTY

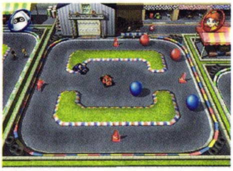
The Extras Zone is open to all kinds of riffraff, so your Miis should feel right at home there. Select any Mii stored on your Wii console or Wii remote then put it to the test against other Miis or Mario and his crew. For more on the Extras Zone, see "Mii Loves to Party" on page 45.

TILT TO STEER



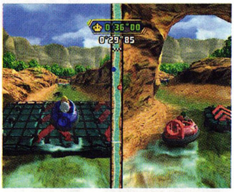
Wii's motion sensors offer the high-performance steering the modern gamer demands from his 15-second driving experience. Just hold the Wii remote sideways, then tilt it left or right to steer.

Bumper Balloons



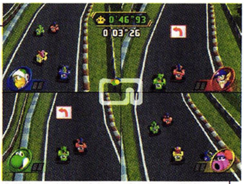
Most obstacle courses challenge you to go around the obstacles, but Bumper Balloons requires you to go through them. Pop the balloons that match your car's color.

Lean, Mean Ravine



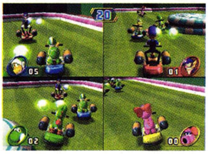
The world would be a better place if everyone just cooperated. At the very least, the hovercraft-racing part of the world would improve. Coordinate your steering direction with a partner to win the race.

Kartastrophe



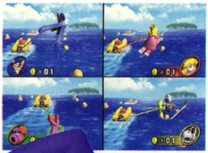
Kartastrophe is a very straightforward kart racing game, except for the hairpin turns. You'll have no excuses for missing the turns—signs pop up to tell you which way to go.

Scooter Pursuit



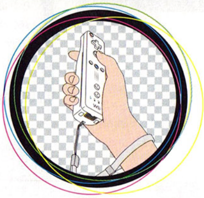
The scooters in this game function kind of like Segways, except that Segways don't have ball cannons mounted on them. Shoot opponents as many times as you can before time runs out.

Water Ski Spree



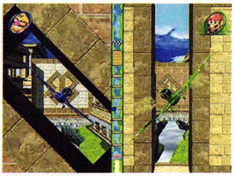
Steer your water skier over ramps to collect coins. Don't collect the floating mines—no points are awarded for collecting floating mines.

POINT AND TILT



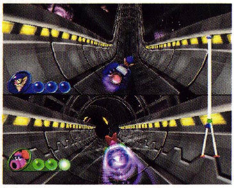
The point-and-tilt control scheme is kind of like turning a screwdriver to steer something. If you have to actually steer something with a screwdriver in real life, then whatever you're steering is probably broken. Check the owner's manual.

Wing and a Scare



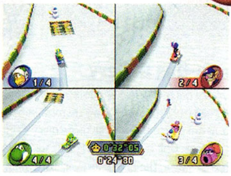
Wing and a Scare challenges you to steer your plane through narrow openings in stone walls. It illustrates why most teenagers shouldn't fly airplanes—they'd be trying this kind of crap all the time.

Cosmic Slalom



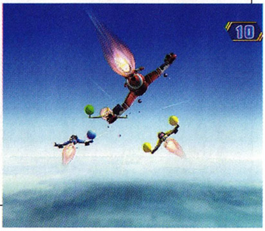
Slide back and forth to avoid barriers as you blast down a Habitrail-like bobsled course in outer space (don't worry: there are no giant hamsters). You get only three boosts—execute them with the A or B Buttons. Make them count!

Alpine Assault



The mountain just got a ton of fresh powder, brah! Carve turns on your snowboard and catch sick air off the ramps for a bit of extra speed. Don't hit the snowmen, or they'll, like, totally slow you down.

Swervin' Skies



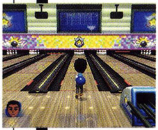
In this flying game, one player must fire balls to pop other players' wing-mounted balloons before time runs out. The other players need to protect their balloons. Don't worry—the planes aren't actually held up by the balloons. For this game, you also tilt the controller on its vertical axis.

AVATAR ACTION

Mii Loves to Party!

Has Mario been getting on your nerves lately? Take your Mii avatar into the game, then stick it to mustache boy in the Extras Zone minigames. There are eight games to choose from—four are unlockable—and as many ways to school the denizens of the Mushroom Kingdom!

SPORTS OF SORTS



The Wii remote is the perfect control mechanism for a bowling game. Show those Nintendo characters what you've learned playing Wii Sports.

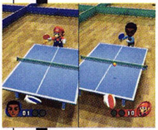
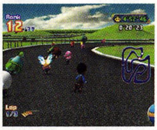


Table Menace actually plays more like Wii Sports Tennis than Wii Play Table Tennis. Time your swings perfectly for extra power! The first player to get 11 points wins.

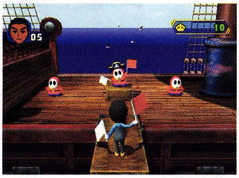
MOPED MAYHEM



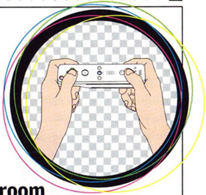
You could argue that the bikes in this race are not mopeds—no one seems to be pedaling—but you can't argue with how much fun it is to race 29 other characters around the track.

VARIETY PACK

From puzzle games such as Trial by Tile and Puzzle Pillar to the Simon-Says-like game Flagging Rights, the Extras Zone should have something for almost every taste.



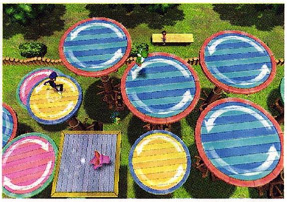
CLASSIC CONTROL



Hey, NES fans! Do you miss the days when a Control Pad and couple of buttons were all you needed to get it done? If you're the kind of person who doesn't need to be pampered by fancy motion controls, then indulge yourself in the spartan pleasures of the two games in this category.

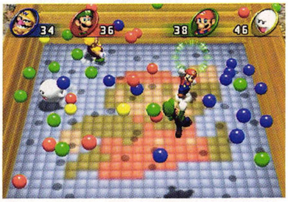
Sick and Twisted

A four-man race across rotating platforms means somebody is going to kiss the turf before all is said and done. Somebody else will probably kiss the Bullet Bills that streak across the screen when you least expect them.



Mosh-Pit Playroom

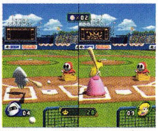
These hard-rocking toddlers are blowing off nap time to mix it up in their inflatable playpen. Pop all 50 balls that match your assigned color before your three opponents beat you to the punch.



ODDS AND ENDS

Some of the games in Mario Party 8 use control schemes that don't fit neatly into any category. In most cases, the control movements are pretty good simulations of the activities shown in the games. In all cases, you will look goofy while you execute the movements.

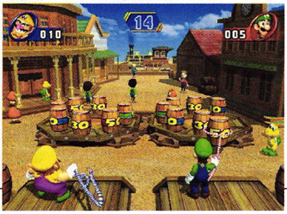
Swing Kings



Your Shy Guy batting coach will toss up some meatballs that you can blast into the cheap seats. Try to connect with 20 pitches by swinging the Wii remote like a bat. If you swat more balls into the outfield than your opponent does, you win!

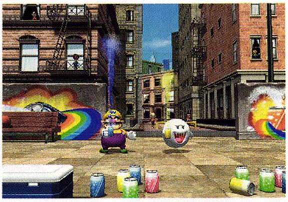
Blazing Lassos

Spin the Wii remote like a lasso then toss the rope over rotating barrels so you can yank them back to your pile of booty. Not all barrels are created equal, though—look for the barrels with the highest numbers when you pick your targets.

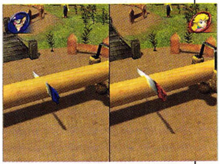


Shake It Up

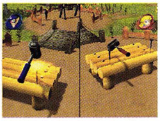
Shaking a soda can usually isn't a desirable activity, but this minigame challenges two players to fuel a geyser of sugary liquid by jerking the Wii remote up and down.

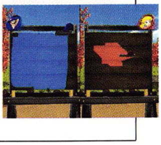


Breakneck Building



Three minigames in one, Breakneck Building requires would-be carpenters to compete in a handyman triathlon that requires you to use your Wii remote like a saw, a hammer, and a paintbrush. Contest coordinators will have to hire a pro later to fix your shoddy workmanship.

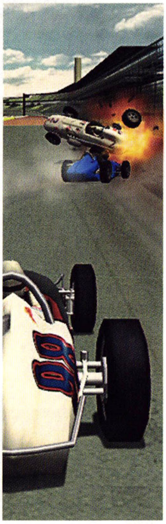


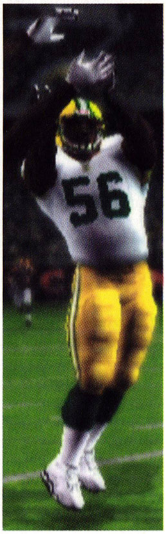


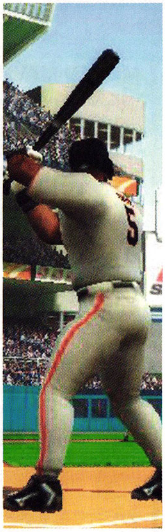
2007

Wii™

SPORTS PREVIEW







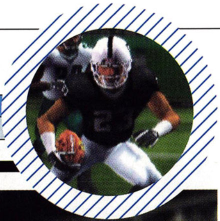
Madden NFL 08

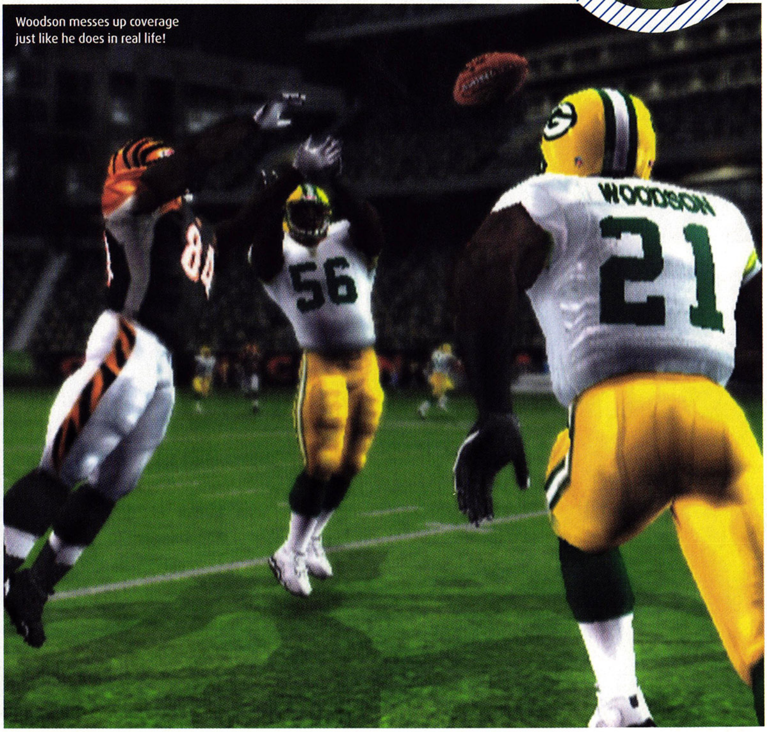
Publisher Electronic Arts

By Giancarlo Varanini

Developer Electonic Arts

>>Release Date: August 2007





Woodson messes up coverage just like he does in real life!

> "Madden will always be online."

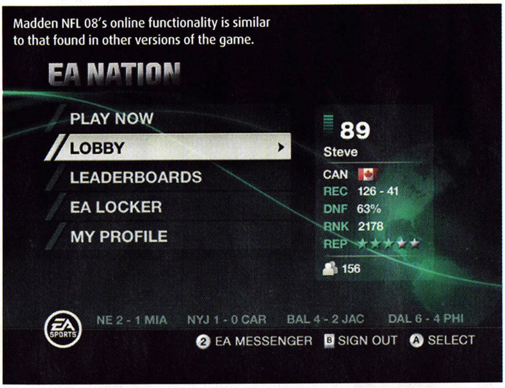
Scouting Report:

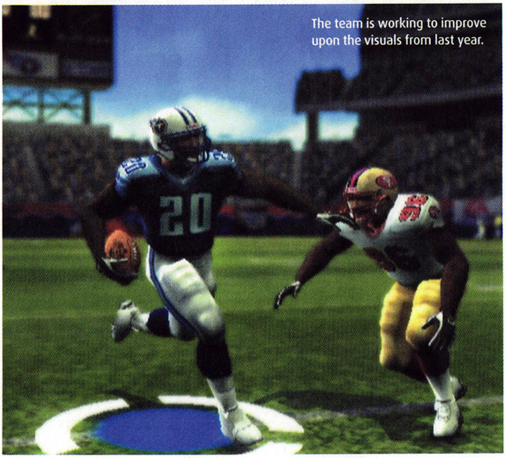
Madden's Wii debut last year was a learning experience for the team at Electronic Arts—not so much because of the game, but rather the kind of people that were playing it. "Last year's game was a huge success. It introduced a brand-new way to play the Madden franchise and it did a great job of catering to the innovation and the freshness of Wii," says EA Sports producer Thomas Singleton. "It opened up this door, making it accessible to both Madden fans and casual Wii consumers. That's what we're trying to focus on this year." So fear not, longtime Madden fans: you'll still find series mainstays to fulfill your pro-football needs. The usual in-depth franchise mode will be a part of the experience, as will a superstar mode that lets you take a player from relative obscurity all the way to the Pro Football Hall of Fame. But make no mistake—with new Wii-specific modes and continued refinement of the motion controls, EA is well on its way to reaching its goal of near-universal appeal.

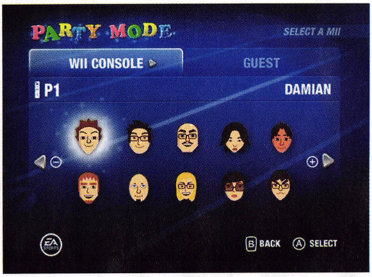
Wii Readiness:

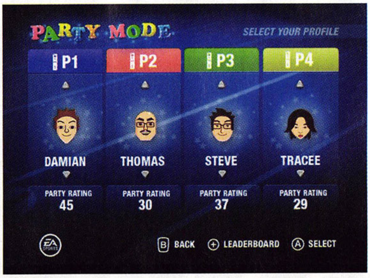
Everything that made the Wii version of Madden NFL 07 stand out is returning in Madden NFL 08, and then some. The motion controls that made such a huge impact on the gameplay are back. But this time EA is taking steps to ensure that the game attracts even more people by making it a less intimidating experience. "One of the things we're trying to push to the casual consumer is letting them know that they did something right," says Singleton. "We're including an onscreen help system that lets you know when you should snap the ball, throw the ball, intercept the ball. It will have a picture of the actual gesture to let you know what to do, but it won't be totally intrusive and in your face."

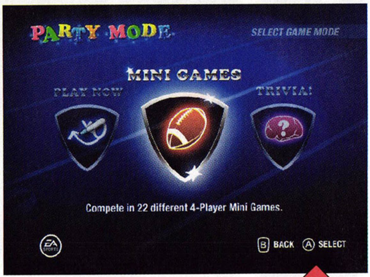
But those that have already come to grips with the Wii control scheme won't be left out in the cold. EA has tightened the controls and is examined what worked last year and what changes were necessary to make the experience a little tighter for sports fans. "What we found last year was that there were a lot of great motions and gestures. Some of those gestures work really well and are really responsive," says Damian Zerr, producer at EA Sports. "Some of the gestures, specifically the two-hand-


Madden NFL 08's online functionality is similar to that found in other versions of the game.
EA NATION
PLAY NOW
LOBBY
LEADERBOARDS
EA LOCKER
MY PROFILE
89
Steve
CAN
REC 126 - 41
DNF 63%
RNK 2178
REP ★★★★★
156
NE 2 - 1 MIA
NYJ 1 - 0 CAR
BAL 4 - 2 JAC
DAL 6 - 4 PHI
2 EA MESSENGER
B SIGN OUT
A SELECT


The team is working to improve upon the visuals from last year.


PARTY MODE
SELECT A MII
WII CONSOLE
GUEST
P1
DAMIAN
B BACK
A SELECT


PARTY MODE
SELECT YOUR PROFILE
P1
P2
P3
P4
DAMIAN
THOMAS
STEVE
TRACEE
PARTY RATING 45
PARTY RATING 30
PARTY RATING 37
PARTY RATING 29
B BACK
+ LEADERBOARD
A SELECT


PARTY MODE
SELECT GAME MODE
MINI GAMES
PLAY NOW
TRIVIA!
B BACK
A SELECT

Compete in 22 different 4-Player Mini Games.

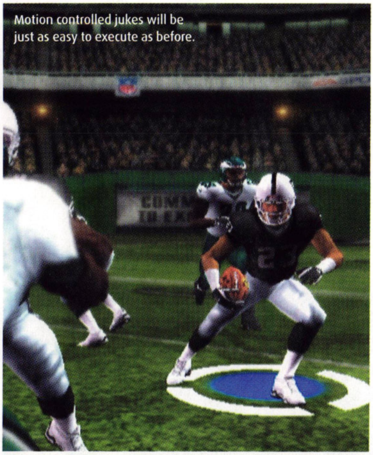
The party mode plays a huge part in Madden NFL 08 since so much of the game is being designed around the idea of playing with other people. But all of the elements that make the Madden series so popular amongst its fans are still there.

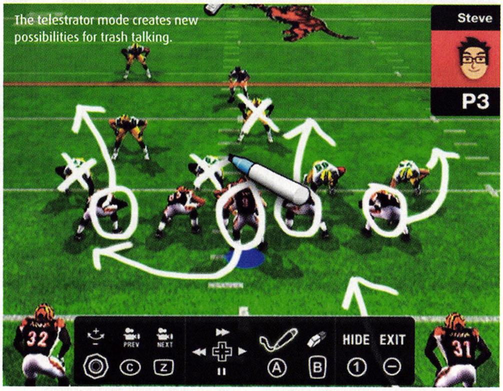
ed gestures, were a little complex. They were difficult to do while in the heat of the moment. What we're trying to do this year is refine and polish . . . since there are more references out there for successful gestures." One of the new single-handed gestures is the audible system. Essentially, these function the same way that audibles do in any other football game, allowing you to change a play at the line of scrimmage on offense or adjust coverage on defense. Simply flick the nunchuk up, down, right, or left depending on the play that you want.

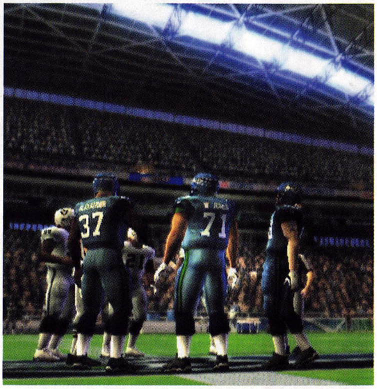
The refined motion controls aren't the only new feature that comes into play. "We're tapping into the [connection between] social gaming and bragging rights. If you watch the commercials for Madden 07, they show guys replaying plays and talking trash to each other," Singleton explains. "[When you make a good play] it's going to give the option to launch into telestrator mode. I now have the ability to fast-forward, rewind, and change the camera angle. And while pressing the A Button I have the ability to literally write on the screen. I can precisely show how I obliterated my opponent's offensive line." The victim of the telestrator won't be forced to watch his mistake repeatedly, though. By shaking the nunchuk and the Wii remote repeatedly, you can shorten the amount of time the other player has to rub salt in the wound.

It doesn't stop there. Also being introduced this year is a party mode that features 22 minigames, including three of the ones from last year's game. There are also nine brand-new minicamp drills, including a 40-yard dash. Each has been designed around natural motion controls that are possible only with Wii. The party mode also has a football-trivia option in which up to four players can battle to find out who reigns supreme. Your performance in the party-mode activities affects your overall player rating, which can go as high as 99. 2-D versions of the Miis you and others have chosen accompany individual player ratings, so you can tell which person has which rating right away. Unfortunately, you can't play as Miis in the game itself. "That might be a little jarring in a football game," Zerr jokes. "It's meant to be more of a visual representation of my party-mode alias."

Online play brings another dimension to the Madden social experience. That's


Motion controlled jukes will be just as easy to execute as before.


The telestrator mode creates new possibilities for trash talking.



right—Madden will be one of the first to take advantage of online play for Wii. And it sounds like there will be plenty of cool features: "If you've played any of our sports franchises, you've seen the ESPN integration and the 'always online' functionality," says Zerr. "Madden will always be online. So you'll get ticker updates from ESPN while you're sitting in the front end, if you so choose to have them. Exhibition match-ups will be there. Leaderboards will be there. All the stat tracking you're used to in any successful online game will be there." Downloadable rosters will also be available, but you'll have to wait until next year for the possibility of downloadable content.

We don't yet know how the friend-code system will be implemented, if at all, since EA plans on re-creating the online experience featured in other online versions of the game. But we do know that online play will offer the EA instant messaging system found in the other game versions. "We're in the process of . . . looking into the Wii version of our online system to try and simplify things," says Singleton. "One of the things that Nintendo does really well, from a philosophical standpoint, is to establish friends and link people up for quick matches. We're looking for ways to push that and Madden [for] Wii will be the first to experience it. It's in new territory for a lot of developers, so we're keeping Nintendo in the loop as far as what we're doing. I think Madden will be one of those games that helps Nintendo and us at the same time."

Outlook:

It's exciting to see some innovations in a genre that's been relatively stagnant for years. There's no question that Madden NFL 08 is charting new territory. Despite having all of the features that Madden fans have come to know and love, and it remains a simulation of professional football (rather than going for the more arcade-like feel of the NFL Street franchise), Madden NFL 08 includes "social" features designed to attract people that wouldn't normally play Madden or people who were intimidated by older control schemes. The party mode may be the start of a phenomenon for the sports genre, and the motion-control system is a natural fit for football. If EA Sports can kick up the visual quality a little bit from last year's Madden, it'll have all the bases covered.

Mario Strikers Charged

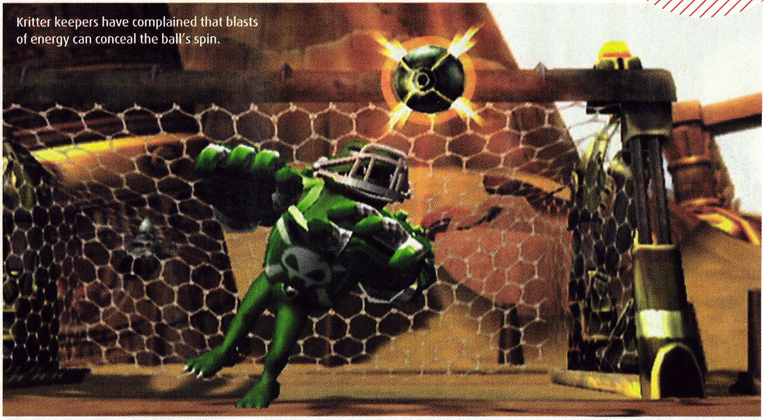
Publisher Nintendo

Developer Next Level Games

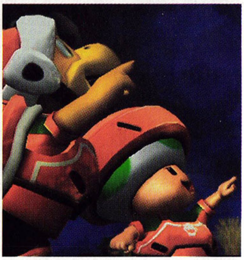
By Drew Williams

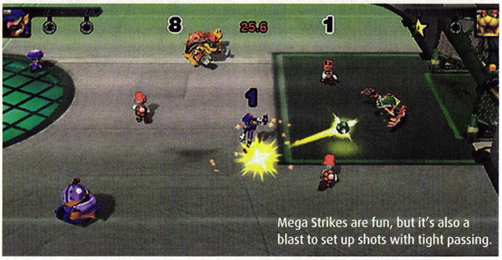
>>Release Date: Summer 2007

“It’ll awaken your inner hooligan.”



Kritter keepers have complained that blasts of energy can conceal the ball’s spin.





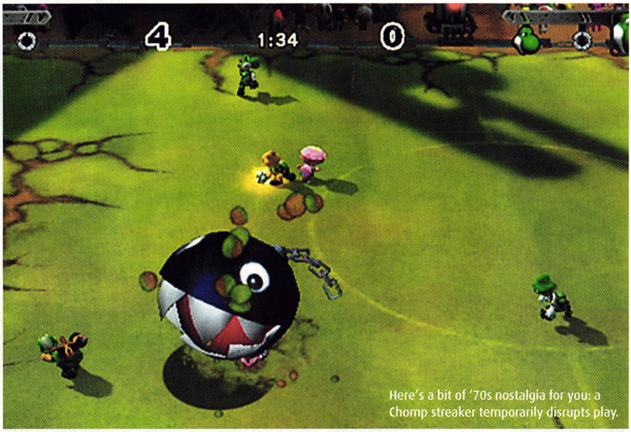
Mega Strikes are fun, but it’s also a blast to set up shots with tight passing.

Scouting Report:

At recent international soccer tournaments, there has been a lot of griping about new ball designs—that they’re too slick, too light, too disorienting for goalkeepers, and so on. Mario Strikers Charged offers an innovative solution to all the controversy: instead of a ball, use a metal sphere that looks like a burning jet engine. It may be hard on Mario’s metatarsals, but it makes for some explosive footie matches. With each pass, the metal orb takes on energy and glows brighter and brighter . . . until someone blasts a high-velocity shot at the goal. Those Kritters protecting the goal don't wear face masks for nothing!

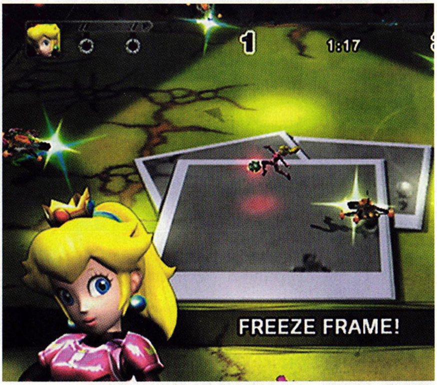
The “ball” isn’t the only innovation in Nintendo’s follow-up to Super Mario Strikers (SMS). Developer Next Level Games has taken everything that made the GameCube title great and booted it into the back of the net. The Wii’s extra horsepower ratchets up the speed and mayhem on the pitch to achieve an appealing balance of coherence and chaos.

On the *coherence* side of the equation, Charged offers tight passing—from the lightning-fast, one-touch variety to strategic long balls—and a variety of fun ways to score. The most dramatic attack is the Mega Strike, executed by team captains. Like the Super Strike from SMS, a Mega Strike involves stopping a fast-moving meter (similar to those found in many golf games) to unleash a powerful, character-specific move. Unlike the Super Strike, however, the Mega Strike offers the chance to score up to six goals at once—but only if your opponent is flat on his feet in the goal box. Initiating your Mega Strike triggers a goalkeeper minigame in which your opponent attempts to bat down each shot—light-gun style—using the Wii remote’s infrared (IR) sensors. Of course, the better your timing on the strike, the harder it is to stop. The spectacular attack animations are reason enough to try the moves, but it doesn’t hurt to rack up a pile of goals in the process. And you probably won’t tire of the animations, because a competent opponent won’t give you many opportunities to see them. Defensive moves have a level of ferocity usually reserved for prison hockey leagues. Just get within a reasonable distance of the player who has the ball, then snap the Wii remote—the player under your control will take a devastating cheap shot that makes Zinédine Zidane’s World Cup headbutt look like a love tap. (For a particularly spectacular takedown, you can body-check opponents into the electrified walls that surround each arena.)



Here's a bit of '70s nostalgia for you: a Chomp streaker temporarily disrupts play.

The smiling sidekick mask is off, and Diddy can finally reveal his primal rage.



Fun as it is to smack Toad around, you'll need to limit your attacks to the player with the ball, however. Each time you manhandle a player off the ball, the opposing team captain will get a power-up, and that's where the *chaos* comes into play.

Power-ups range from relatively benign banana peels and Koopa shells to Super Abilities like a giant-sized Mario (or Luigi) and DK's Thunderclap move. Because players are also awarded a power-up each time they fire off a powered shot (by holding down the B Button), there is danger raining down on the field almost every moment of play. The different arenas also offer an assortment of random challenges, such as windblown cows, lightning bolts, molten magma, and bone-crushing Thwomps. In other words, you'll need to keep the ball moving if you don't want to end up a greasy smear on the grass.

Wii Readiness:

The Wii remote's IR sensor is used for fast-twitch, light-gun-style target shooting in the goalkeeper minigames during Mega Strikes; the accelerometer is used for motion-sensitive defensive attacks. The defensive moves are particularly intense during multiplayer matches—there are many ways to milk single-player fun out of Mario Strikers Charged, but the game is really designed to be a multiplayer slugfest. Up to four players can compete locally or, even better, online. As the first Wi-Fi sports game on Wii (and the second game overall, after Pokémon Battle Revolution), Charged has some big cleats to fill. But if the online experience can match the frenzy of the core gameplay, there should be legions of Strikers duking it out around the world.

Outlook:

As Smash Bros. fans know, there are few activities more fun than using beloved Nintendo characters to maul other beloved Nintendo characters. Mario's latest sports outing is a glorious whirlwind of environmental effects, lethal projectiles, and bizarre animations. From the tumultuous crowds in the stands to the colorful maelstrom on the pitch, Charged is a beautiful version of "the beautiful game." Each match offers two to five minutes of pulse-pounding, soccer-themed combat that will awaken your inner hooligan.

The Bigs

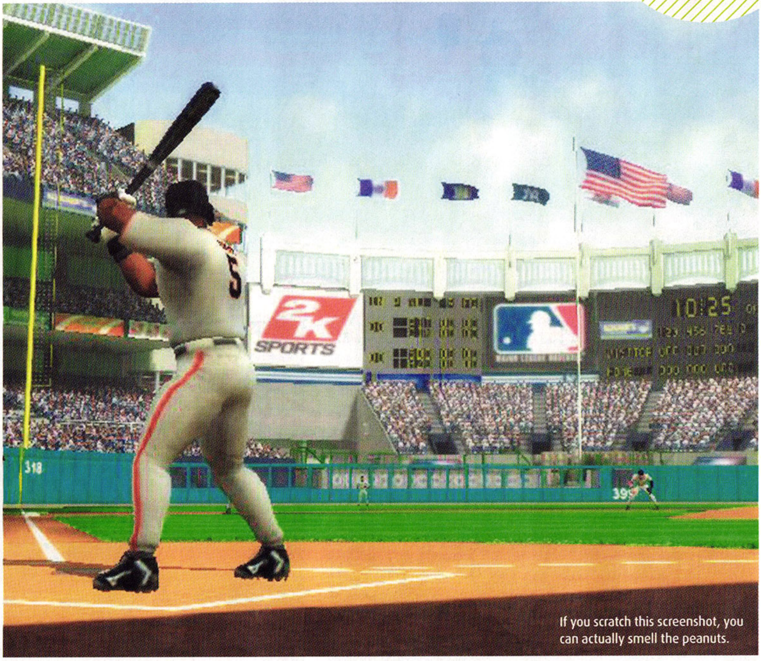
Publisher 2K Sports

By Steve Thomason

Developer Blue Castle Games

>>Release Date: June 2007

“The idea . . . is ‘heroic baseball.’”



If you scratch this screenshot, you can actually smell the peanuts.

Scouting Report:

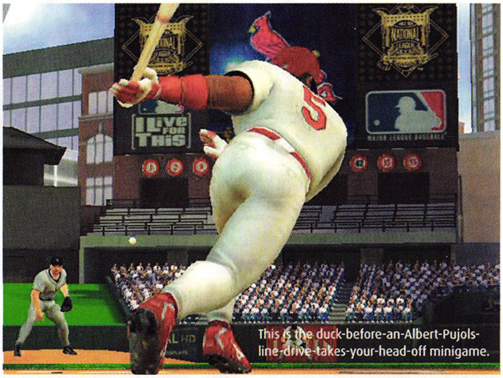
The Bigs takes every aspect of baseball and supersizes it. Hitters are stronger, pitchers have nastier stuff, the stadiums are larger-than-life, and nearly every play is worthy of the highlight reel. It's a distinctly arcade-style take on the great American pastime. But don't expect the kind of WWE-style fisticuffs that were so prevalent in Midway's old SlugFest series. “The idea behind The Bigs is ‘heroic baseball,’” says producer Dan Brady. “We wanted to make baseball as exciting as it could possibly be while really staying true to the sport and not reinventing anything.”

The main stage for those heroics is the game's unique Rookie Challenge mode. Rather than play through a regular 162-game season, you'll create a position player and travel from city to city to tackle specific challenges. You might go to Cleveland, for instance, and be tasked with chasing the closer (which shouldn't be too difficult with that bullpen), or head to Oakland, where you'll be required to make three spectacular fielding plays over the course of the game. Your rookie starts out pretty green, but 12 training minigames allow you to improve his skills in five disciplines: power, contact, arm, glove, and baserunning. As you progress through the campaign, you'll also be challenged to various “boss battles,” such as a footrace against the speedy Ichiro. (No word yet on whether David Wells will challenge you to a hotdog-eating contest.)

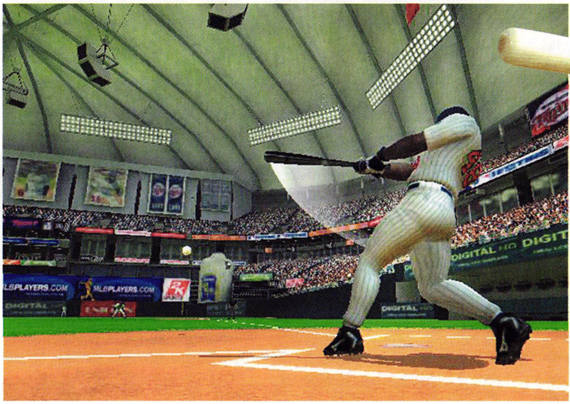
Though the spotlight is primarily on your created player, the rest of your team does matter. In fact, you'll occasionally compete in Player Steal games that let you choose a player from the opposing team and add him to your roster if you win. Eventually you can assemble an All-Star-caliber squad, which will certainly help your rookie achieve his ultimate goal of becoming the World Series MVP.

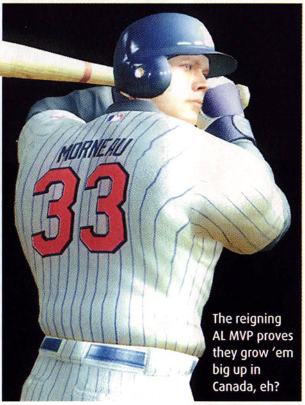
The Bigs will also offer a four-player mode (two players per team), and while Brady isn't ready to divulge specifics just yet, he promises that it will succeed where other baseball titles featuring a cooperative element have failed. “It really hasn't been done very well before, to actually have more than one person per team,” says the producer. “We really think that we've latched onto something. We've got some interesting gameplay mechanics that we think really make it something that the user is going to enjoy.”

Of course, what's an over-the-top sports title without some outrageous power-ups? During a game, playing solid ball will gradually fill your points meter at the top of the screen. Once that meter has reached a certain level, you can trigger a Power Blast if you're in the batter's box, or some Big Heat if you're on the mound. “I can't go into too much detail right now,” says Brady, “But suffice to say those moments are really the pinnacle of the game. They're all about upping the speed and the twitch factor, and really taking the game to another level visually. There's also



This is the duck-before-an-Albert-Pujols-line-drive-takes-your-head-off minigame.





The reigning AL MVP proves they grow 'em big up in Canada, eh?

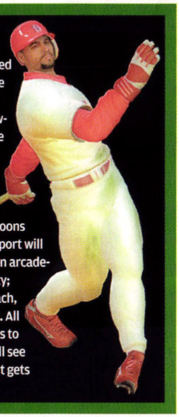
some really cool gameplay mechanics associated with them. And if both sides execute their power-ups at the same time, we run into this situation where we basically get into the ultimate batter-pitcher duel. The result is either going to be the batter scoring quite a few runs or the pitcher stealing all of the momentum from the offense and giving a big point swing to the defense."

Wii Readiness:

When it comes to taking advantage of the Wii controller, Brady and his team are looking to go the distance. "We really knew right away that we wanted to have a fully executed, fully realized Wii product," says the producer. "We didn't want it to be something that felt like it was a hybrid or anything like that. We really wanted to take advantage of every opportunity that we had to use those controls as effectively as we possibly could." That means every facet of the game will involve some manner of motion control. At the plate, you'll swing the Wii remote as you would a baseball bat, and the game measures both your timing and the angle of your swing to determine the result. After making contact, you'll run the bases by shaking the Wii remote and nunchuk alternately in a drumming motion, then you'll flick both of them down at the same time if you need to slide. You'll use the same drumming motion to run down a ball on defense (though you'll guide your player with the analog stick), and you can dive by flicking the remote and nunchuk left or right, as well as climb the wall by lifting both controllers over your head. Finally, while on the mound, you'll press a button to select your pitch, then go through the throwing motion with the Wii remote. Your arm speed and wrist movement affect the velocity and break on the pitch, though it's obviously scaled down from real life so you won't need Tommy John surgery at the end of the campaign.

Outlook:

The Bigs is the first full-fledged baseball game on Wii, and if the developers are able to nail the controls, it could be a real showcase for the system. The unique Rookie Challenge lends the game an almost RPG-like quality, and the multiplayer mode could be a great way to pass those lazy summer afternoons with your friends. Fans of the sport will appreciate the balance between arcade-style gameplay and authenticity; despite its exaggerated approach, The Bigs still feels like baseball. All in all, this inaugural effort looks to have major-league upside. We'll see how the game performs when it gets called up in June.



Legends of the Indy 500

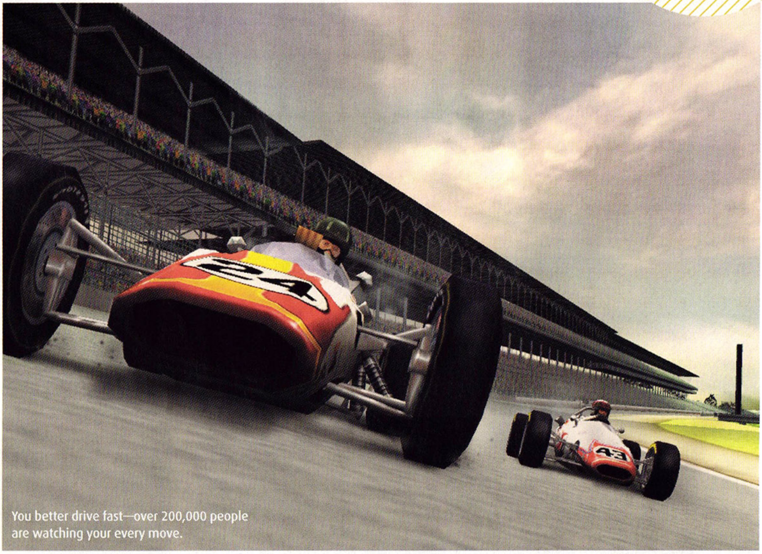
Publisher Destineer

By Chris Shepperd

Developer Torus Games

>>Release Date: Fall 2007

"a white-knuckle sensation"



You better drive fast—over 200,000 people are watching your every move.

Scouting Report:

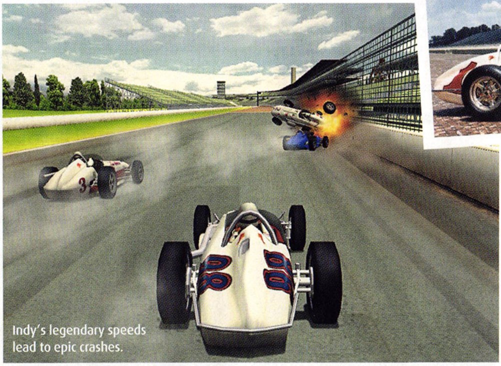
The 1960s were, without question, the glory days of the Indianapolis 500. It was a time of enormous transition for the annual Memorial Day-weekend event: some of the most storied drivers in the race's history—like A.J. Foyt, Mario Andretti, and Eddie Sachs—rose to fame (and fell to tragedy) during this period, and the cars and track began to transition into the race we know today. Covering the Indianapolis 500's events from 1961 to 1971, Destineer looks to capture this momentous era with Legends of the Indy 500 on Wii and DS later this year. We take the racing sim out for a spin in an exclusive hands-on look at the Wii version.

It's easy to tell that authenticity has driven the development of Legends of the Indy 500. In speaking with the game designers, you can feel the enthusiasm for the race, and the desire to get everything just right. The developers researched every nuance of Indy, including visiting the racetrack to pore over records, sifting through volumes of archive photos, and even taking some of the vintage racecars out onto the track (under watchful supervision, of course!). The cars are the first place you can see Legends' attention to detail.

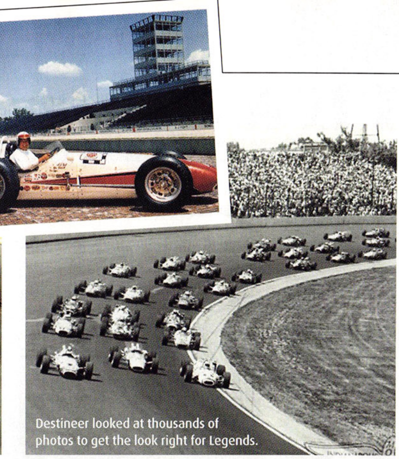
At the beginning of the '60s, Indy cars were still the domain of garage mechanics and automobile buffs. But as the decade progressed, the sciences of aerodynamics and weight distribution led to many of the vehicles beginning their lives in laboratories and wind tunnels. As you play Legends of the Indy 500 through each year, you'll get a feeling for how the cars changed: When you switch from a front-engine vehicle to a rear-engine machine, you'll notice the difference in the handling. And when you hop into an experimental turbine-engine racer (powered by a modified helicopter engine), you'll feel the extra force and hear its telltale whine. Things changed inside the cockpit, as well: speedometers weren't regarded as necessary early on (drivers relied solely on a tachometer and an oil gauge), but they were added as the cars became much faster; you'll see the dashboard change accordingly as the years roll by. By the time you reach 1971, these technological advancements have born fruit—most of the vehicles are equipped with stabilizing wings to aid downforce. No matter what the year, the speeds at Indy have led to spectacular crashes—realistic collisions and car damage lend Legends a white-knuckle sensation as you zoom around the course.

The track went through its own transformations during the 1960s: 1961 was the last year that the Indianapolis 500's long front straight was paved with brick (hence the track's nickname, "The Brickyard"); in 1962 it was asphalted over, leaving only a narrow band of the original bricks along the start/finish line. This change and other enhancements, such as new grandstands and buildings alongside the course, are represented in full detail just as they appeared in a given year. Plus, additional details were added to contribute to the authentic feel, such as pit-signaling just as it was done back in the day—one of the crew members would scrawl on a chalkboard when to pull into the pit and flash it to the driver as he went by.

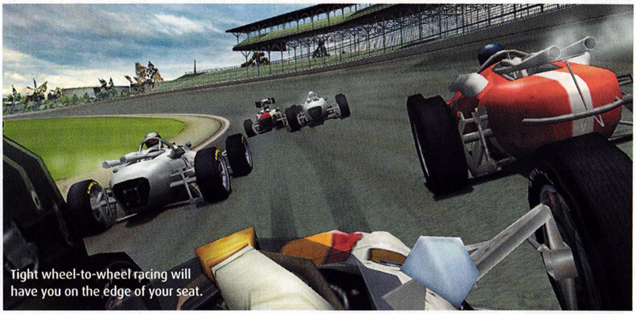
The pilots of these machines were cultural titans of their day—they were as popular as any baseball player or movie star. Drivers like Mario Andretti and Bobby and Al Unser rose to fame on Indy's 2.5-mile oval during the 1960s. In Legends of the Indy 500, you'll take on the roles of these famous racers, and more—30 real drivers in all are represented. The on-course relationships between the drivers are preserved, too—rivalries build and shift as you progress through the years, causing some drivers to pursue you more aggres-



Indy's legendary speeds lead to epic crashes.



Destineer looked at thousands of photos to get the look right for Legends.



Tight wheel-to-wheel racing will have you on the edge of your seat.

sively than they would others. The Artificial Intelligence of the CPU-controlled drivers changes progressively, as well—for example, A.J. Foyt's brash, pedal-to-the-metal driving style becomes more and more pronounced as you race against him year after year.

As fast as they were, the top speed of the best cars of the '60s wasn't near what it is today, which made the contests all-day affairs. To avoid the tedium of prolonged races, the Legends developers chose to highlight Indy's most memorable events in historically based missions. (But worry not, purists—the option to race full, 200-lap races is available, complete with pit stops and yellow flags.) For some missions you might have to overtake a certain number of cars in only a few laps; in others you may have to qualify with a good enough time to be awarded the pole position in a new type of car. You'll also have to do missions that change the course of history, such as help Eddie Sachs avert the disaster that took his life in the 1964 Indy 500, or assist Parnelli Jones in winning the 1967 race, which he led when a transmission bearing cost him victory on the 197th lap.

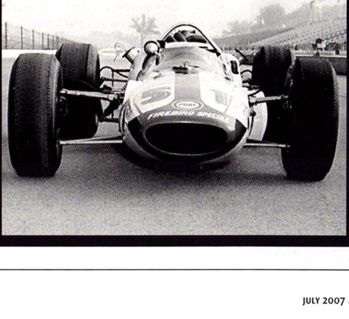
Wii Readiness:

By default, Legends of the Indy 500 utilizes the sideways-remote control style that other Wii racing games have used. The 1 and 2 Buttons control the gas and brakes. In the version we played, the handling felt exceptionally tight—a slight lean of the Wii remote would sling your car through the corners, and a little extra nudge would send it into a realistic out-of-control spin; the developers have found a sweet spot in the cars' handling that seems to have eluded previous racing-game creators. The people at Destineer also plan on including full customization for the controls, allowing you to change it however you please. We weren't able to see this in action, but we're excited by the possibilities.

You'll use the Wii remote during pit stops as well as for driving. When you pull into the pit, you'll perform a minigame that's tied to what task you need to do, such as change tires, fill the gas tank, and even put out fires (which were a constant danger in the '60s, when sparks would light gas vapors). These minigames will be an integral part of tight races, in which you must decide whether and when to pit.

Outlook:

Legends of the Indy 500 is several months away from release, and although it's already looking superb, the developers are still tweaking visual effects to add to the authentic look. With its unwavering devotion to historical accuracy and the solid, realistic feel of the cars, both racing-game fans and followers of the Indianapolis 500 should keep this one on their radar. We're also looking forward to bringing you details about the DS version—the brief time we spent with it stunned us with smooth 3-D graphics. We'll have more on both titles as we get closer to the September launch dates.



FIFA Soccer 08

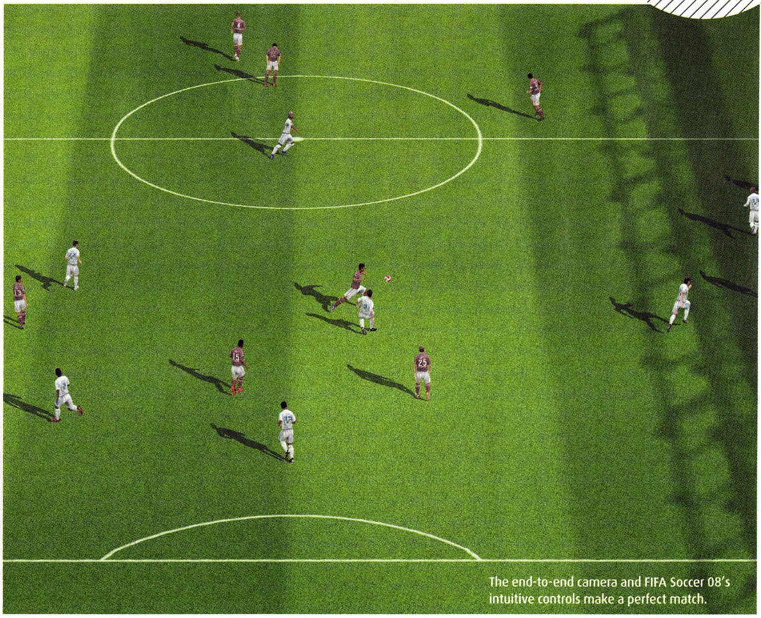
Publisher Electronic Arts

Developer Electronic Arts

By Kent Miller

>>Release Date: Fall 2007

"Bending it like Beckham..."



The end-to-end camera and FIFA Soccer 08's intuitive controls make a perfect match.

Scouting Report:

It takes teamwork to build powerhouse franchises in sports – and video games. EA Canada's FIFA Soccer 08 Wii team draws on the extensive resources of the world's biggest independent software publisher.

Example A: With each new entry in EA's flagship football franchise, the challenge gets even more daunting: 34 licensed leagues, 570 teams, and more than 13,000 players. You'll be able to have fun with all the major European, Americas and Asian leagues and of course new Los Angeles Galaxy superstar David Beckham.

13,000 players! I don't think I know that many words.

So how does EA keep track of all those feet, jerseys and stadiums? By drawing on its vast resources. "We have a database team that just maintains the stats for all the leagues," says executive producer Tim Tschirner, who along with associate producer Brad Porteous heads up the FIFA Wii development team at EA Canada.. "They work closely with people in individual territories who keep eyes on all the players."

You can thank all those scouting reports for the accurately observed player behaviors, which seem to get more realistic every year. Other 08 improvements: fine-grained control over formations and the ability to take control of the keeper at anytime. You can even have him move up the field if you're losing in the waning moments. Purists will also appreciate such nifty AI enhancements as keepers lunging more often for fake shots (suckers!).

Example B: EA has groups solely dedicated to building all the player models and stadiums for the FIFA franchise, now in its third decade.

Example C: In case you haven't noticed, EA's made a few other Wii games with names like "Madden" and "Medal of Honor." Developers of said games have given Tschirner and Porteous valuable insights into programming for the world's hottest console. The FIFA Wii team has of course also gotten plenty of assists from Nintendo's extremely helpful developer-support group.

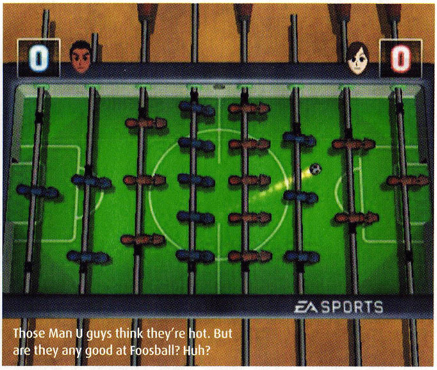
When it debuts this fall, FIFA Soccer 08 will join Madden NFL 08, Pokémon Battle Revolution and Mario Strikers Charged on a growing list of Wii Wi-Fi games. Expect frantic head-to-head action with gamers from around the world, up-to-the-moment roster changes and even a "virtual league" in which rival teams can play online in the days before they meet in real life.

All that background help frees up Tschirner, Porteous and their team to focus on gameplay. Which means, first and foremost, those heavenly Wii controllers.

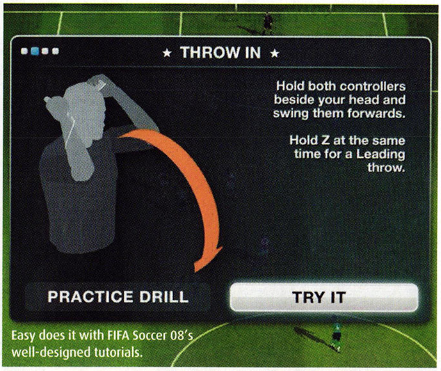
Wii Readiness:

Wii offers the perfect solution for sunny-day fans who can't remember if L+X+X is an early low cross or just a chip shot. Says Tschirne of legacy FIFA games: "[The controls] have gotten pretty sophisticated and if you're not a total controller junkie, it can be pretty overwhelming."

Well, you can forget about memorizing all those arcane combos. Instead, you'll control a player's body with the nunchuk and his



Those Man U guys think they're hot. But are they any good at Foosball? Huh?

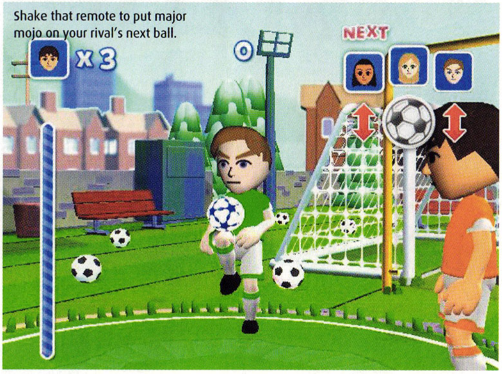


★ THROW IN ★

Hold both controllers beside your head and swing them forwards.

Hold Z at the same time for a Leading throw.

Easy does it with FIFA Soccer 08's well-designed tutorials.



Shake that remote to put major mojo on your rival's next ball.

ball-control moves with the Wii remote.

You kick the ball low by flicking the remote down. You make a lob pass or high shot by flicking the remote ... any guesses now? That's right. Up. You pass left by flicking the Wii remote, naturally enough, left. And now there's no reason to tell you how to pass right.

You'll use both controllers for two-handed moves and slide tackles. This means that you use the same motion for a throw-in as you would in real life, by holding up both the Wii remote and nunchuk and flicking them forward. With natural moves like this, FIFA Wii verges on Wii Sports-like intuitiveness.

You can also rotate the nunchuk's analog stick to add spin to a corner kick. Bending it like Beckham has never been so easy!

User-friendly? FIFA Soccer 08 is downright lovey-dovey. The first time you come across a new move , the game will pause and you'll be asked if you want a quick tutorial. You can practice the move before trying it for real in the match.

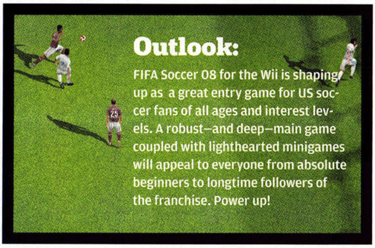
The new controls feel so intuitive that even old-school aficionados will embrace EA's Wii-centric approach. That's because Tschirner and Porteous are making sure that FIFA Wii retains the franchise's in-depth managerial controls. "At its core, it's still the authentic football experience. But we are out to give you a really new way of playing it," says Tschirner.

EA's Wii-thusiasm has even led it to a franchise-first: multiplayer minigames! Starring Miis and simple controls, these lighthearted party games will appeal even to family members whose idea of a keeper is a boyfriend who brings flowers.

One minigame makes a rhythm game out of the familiar keep-the-ball-in-the-air drill. When the ball drops into a target circle, flick your remote in the direction shown by the arrow.

Other minigames include Foosball, with unlockable tables, and a shoot-out in which multiple players can bombard one poor goalie. The low scorer takes goal in the next round. Both the shoot-out and rhythm minigames will have plenty of power-ups.

All three minigames give you the option of playing with a nunchuk or, if you don't have enough to go around, the remote only. By tracking wins, losses and even calories burned, the minigames will foster friendly intra-family rivalry. You can even unlock "Ronald-mii-nho," the Mii version of Brazilian superstar (and reigning FIFA coverguy) Ronaldinho.



Outlook:

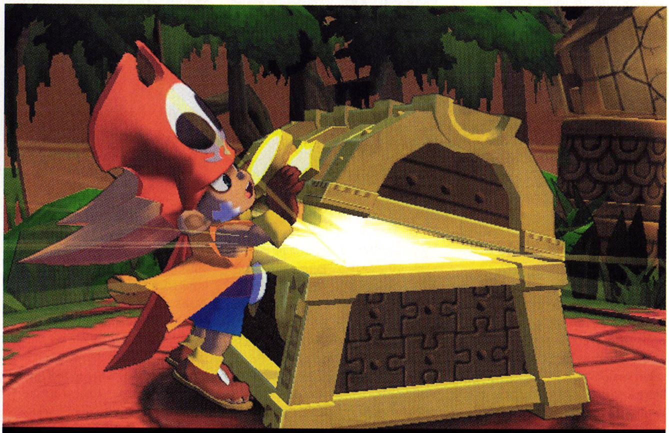
FIFA Soccer 08 for the Wii is shaping up as a great entry game for US soccer fans of all ages and interest levels. A robust—and deep—main game coupled with lighthearted minigames will appeal to everyone from absolute beginners to longtime followers of the franchise. Power up!

TREASURE TROVE

A wealth of gameplay possibilities is the prize in Capcom's first completely original Wii offering: **Project Treasure Island Z.**

By Chris Hoffman

When the Wii hit stores late last year, it's no exaggeration to say that it changed the video game industry. It changed how audiences played games, and it changed how developers created them. The Wii has demanded new types of games for all types of gamers, and Capcom is answering that call with Project Treasure Island Z (working title). By combining elements of point-and-click graphic adventures (think classics like King's Quest or The Secret of Monkey Island) with easily accessible and wildly varied motion-based minigames (a la WarioWare: Smooth Moves or Cooking Mama: Cook Off), the designers hope to push the innovation envelope further than before and create a uniquely compelling adventure-puzzle experience.

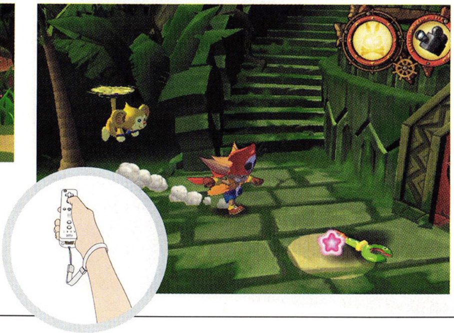


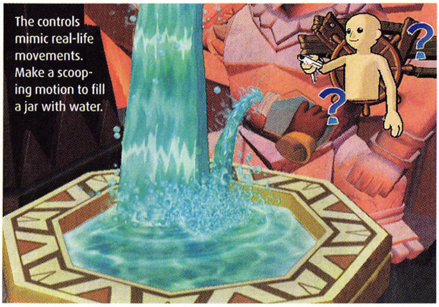
There's nothing that a young pirate likes more than a big box full of booty.

Mind over Matter

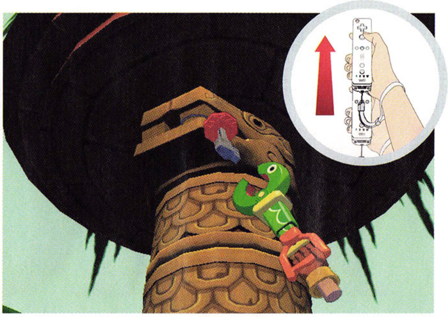
Capcom aims to make Project Treasure Island Z an adventure game unlike any other. According to producer Hironobu Takeshita, his team set out with the goal of being as creative with their software as Nintendo was with the Wii hardware. "It all really began with the introduction of the Wii," recalls Takeshita. "The timing couldn't have been better. The director, a huge long-time fan of adventure games, had a desire to explore the newfound potential to make a puzzle-solving adventure that would introduce a whole new kind of puzzle-solving . . . the kind where you use your hands and your body, not just your head."

The basics of Treasure Island Z are simple: by pointing at the screen with the Wii remote (the game doesn't use the nunchuk) and pressing the A Button, you can maneuver your character—a young pirate-in-training





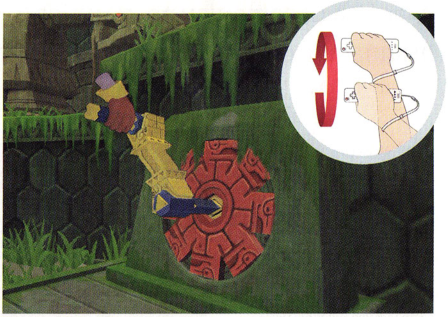
The controls mimic real-life movements. Make a scooping motion to fill a jar with water.



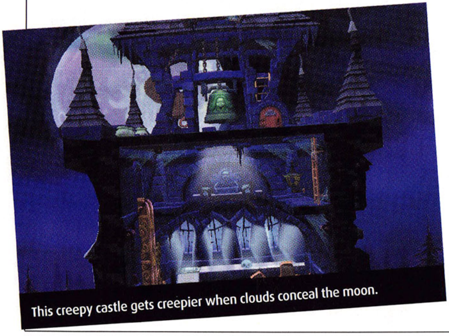
named Zack—anywhere you want. By pressing B, you can manipulate the camera for a better view of your surroundings. To interact with objects in the environment, you simply point at them and press A.

"We see the gameplay mechanics as being extremely important in Treasure Island Z," Takeshita says. "We feel strongly that it should be a game anyone can enjoy, whether male or female, regardless of age. So naturally we made it a point to make the basic controls extremely simple."

What gives the game its potential, however, is that nearly every interaction yields a new and interesting way to use the remote. Early in the game, Zack finds himself falling through the sky with an umbrella in hand; a press of the 1 Button will let him open the umbrella and float safely to Earth. Shortly after that, Zack encounters a tree; after clicking on the tree, you can move the remote forward and backward to simulate shaking an object free from the tree's branches. Other remote uses include twisting it like a key, making a scooping motion to fill a jar with water, turning the remote like a crank, or holding the remote sideways and pressing its buttons to play it like a flute.



"The team spent a lot of time coming up with and tossing around ideas," explains Takeshita. "Personally, I really like the idea of turning the Wii remote upside down. I didn't come up with the idea, but when I couldn't solve a puzzle, I became very frustrated. And when I learned why, I was sold on the incredibly original use of the Wii remote." All told, the development team hopes to include 80 different uses for the remote—more than in any other title.



This creepy castle gets creepier when clouds conceal the moon.

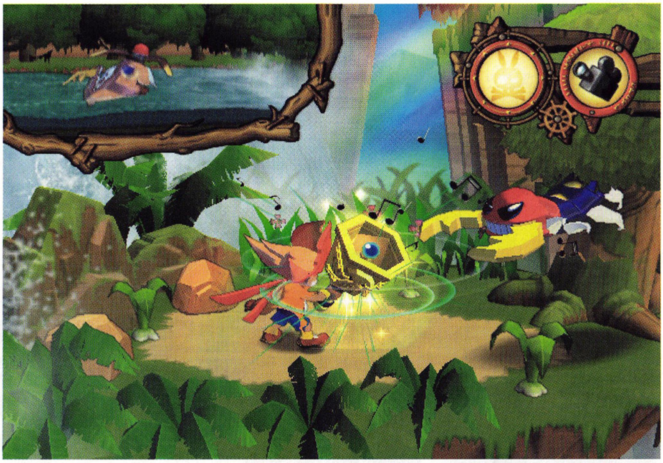
Rogue Squadron

Pirates aren't known for being a particularly loyal or trustworthy bunch, but if there's one thing that gets them inspired, it's the promise of riches. In Zack's case, his motivation is a legendary pirate named Barbaros, whom he encounters toward the beginning of the game. When they meet up, however, Barbaros is only half the man he used to be—to be more precise, he's been turned into a talking golden skull. Barbaros promises Zack that if the apprentice pirate tracks down several magical artifacts—which will restore Barbaros to his former self—he'll give Zack his celebrated pirate ship, which is hidden in a secret location. With this in mind, Zack sets out to explore seven worlds—including jungle ruins, a creepy castle, fiery caves, icy temples, and an airship—featuring a total of more than 20 stages (each of which reportedly takes 30 to 60 minutes to complete).

Lucky for Zack, he isn't alone on his mission; he's accompanied by his talking golden-monkey partner, Wiki. Aside from being a faithful companion, Wiki has magic powers that let him transform into a bell (activated when the player shakes the Wii remote back and forth). The power of the bell is threefold: It draws in any nearby coins, it wards off evil spirits around treasure chests, and, most importantly, it transforms enemies into useful items (which are controlled with various motions of the Wii remote, naturally). A giant centipede, for example, turns into a Centi-Saw (useful for cutting down trees), and frogs morph into bombs.

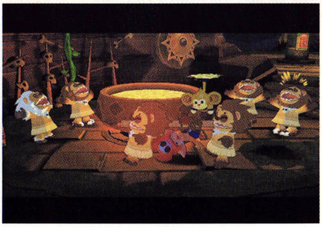
By finding items, transforming enemies, and experimenting with objects in the environment, players will be able to overcome a wide variety of challenging situations. For instance, one stage set in the jungle ruins involves Zack encountering a locked door, finding an out-of-reach key hanging from a pillar, disturbing a nearby pot to reveal a snake, transforming the creature into a Slither Gripper clamp, using it to snag the key, dropping the Slither Gripper (you can hold only one item at a time), and unlocking the door (by your twisting the remote). Beyond the door is the treasure chest Zack's searching for, but if he runs straight to it the floor will collapse, leaving him impaled in a pit of spikes. (The game doesn't feature a life bar, either; chances are you'll suffer a few instant deaths before figuring out the solution to some puzzles.) Needless to say, some more creative item management is necessary for Zack to succeed.

To make things even more interesting, Takeshita promises that some puzzles will have multiple solutions and, just in case the going gets too tough, players will be able to access an in-game hint system. "It's still a little early and I'm sorry that I can't go into too much detail about that at this time," says Takeshita, "but basically the system will allow you to advance in the game even if you find yourself with a puzzle that you just can't solve. Of course, it won't just give you the answer to a puzzle. It will give you hints that will lead you to discover the answer for yourself, which is the fun of the game."

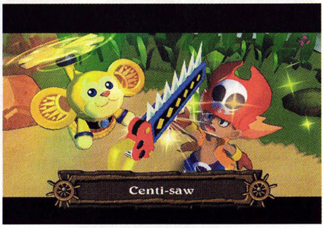


Wealth of Possibilities

In addition to pushing the limits of the Wii controller and breathing new life into the adventure genre, Treasure Island Z is approaching multiplayer gaming from a unique direction. Although what we've seen of the game so far focuses on what's traditionally considered a single-player experience, Takeshita imagines that the game will transcend the boundaries of solo play and allow for gameplay that can be enjoyed by numerous people at once.



Plenty of unpleasant fates await Zack if he doesn't carefully think things through. Live (or die) and learn.



When you shake the Wii remote, you can transform enemies into essential items like the Centi-Saw.

"Only one person at a time will be able to use the Wii remote," Takeshita acknowledges, "but the puzzle-solving itself is a group effort, where friends and family pool their knowledge. And watching them try stages that you've already cleared can be just as amusing as playing alone. We see this as a new kind of multiplayer gameplay." Takeshita seems committed to making the game a social experience, but when asked about a dedicated multiplayer mode, he remains secretive: "As far as a traditional multiplayer mode goes, I can't say anything at this time."

Other aspects of the game are still under wraps as well. Takeshita isn't ready to share just what all the gold coins you collect during gameplay can be used for, what rewards await players who are able to solve the puzzles without using hints, or what types of puzzles and controller uses players will encounter as they get further into the game. But he is ready to comment on why he's enjoyed creating Project Treasure Island Z, and why he hopes players will enjoy it as well:

"The Wii remote provides a completely different mode of interaction. There are so many new experiences, and so many different potential outcomes. Each and every one of those is very exciting and very fresh."

Where's Samuel L. Jackson when you need him?

nintendo Wi-Fi connection

HEAVY METAL

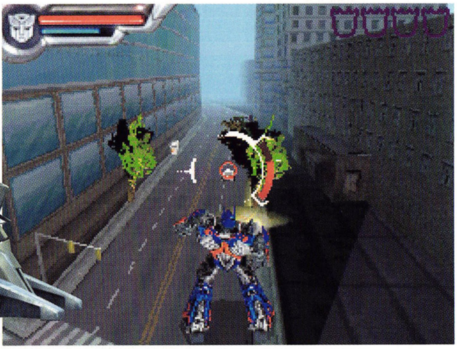
The robots in disguise expand upon their big-screen clash in the Transformers video games for Nintendo DS and Wii.

By Chris Hoffman

They come from the planet Cybertron—warring factions of giant, sentient robots able to reconfigure their bodies into cars, jets, trucks, tanks, and more. On one side: the heroic Autobots. On the other: the evil Decepticons. Collectively they are known as the Transformers, and they first became a part of pop culture in 1984 when Hasbro released a hit toy line (adapted from Japanese manufacturer Takara), coinciding with an animated TV show and a Marvel comic book. More than two decades later, the Transformers are still going strong, with executive producer Steven Spielberg's big-budget live-action movie set for release this July. And since the Transformers are never content to stay in just one form, adaptations of their theatrical exploits are coming to Nintendo DS and Wii courtesy of Activision.

Optimus Prime is a big, mean, fighting machine, and he's ready to smash Decepticons.

PRODUCTS RANGE FROM EVERYONE 10+ TO TEEN
E10+-T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB



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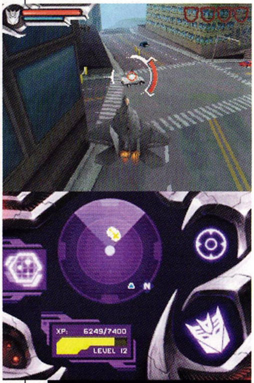
Their War, Our Games

If you're a Transformers fan, Nintendo DS may be the best system for getting your gaming fix—after all, it's playing host to not one but two Transformers releases. As their titles imply, Transformers: Autobots and Transformers: Decepticons let you choose sides in the age-old Cybertronion conflict and battle your sworn enemies. Although the two versions feature different playable characters, storylines, and missions, both offer the same core of open-ended adventuring from the perspective of a hulking robot. As you explore massive environments, you'll accept story-based tasks and optional challenges that take advantage of your transforming abilities and fighting skills.



Press the Decepticon (or Autobot) symbol to transform instantly.

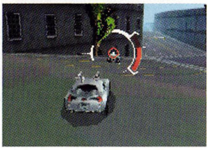
“These are a race of beings at war,” says Rob Caminos, writer/designer at developer Vicarious Visions, “and it's important that not only the shooting be fun but the hand-to-hand combat as well. Empowerment is another aspect; you need the player to feel like a giant 50-foot robot that can crush anything in its path. Just about everything in our game can be destroyed.”

Players have plenty of combat options at their disposal. The A Button unleashes melee attacks, the Y Button fires projectiles using an automatic lock-on system, and the X Button lets players grab and throw. With a press of a button, you can snatch up trees, streetlights, human vehicles, and more and use them as weapons, or you can be less subtle and just grab an opponent outright and slam him into a nearby building. Not that rampant destruction is necessarily a good thing—the more havoc you cause, the harsher the human response will be. As your threat level goes up, more police will rush to your vicinity; even puny humans can damage Transformers when they attack en masse.

When the going gets tough, sometimes it's best to flee or hide rather than fight. By pressing a touch-screen button, you can transform into vehicle mode at any time, which is ideal for escaping attackers, pursuing enemies, or simply reaching objectives faster.

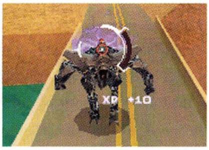
Alternative Transportation

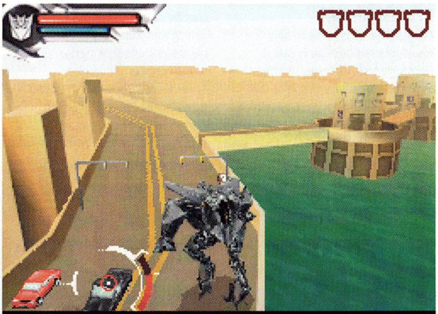
While many of the major Transformers will be playable (the Autobot version features Optimus Prime, Jazz, Ratchet, Ironhide, and Bumblebee, and the Decepticon version features Megatron, Starscream, Brawl, Blackout, and Barricade), one of the DS games' highlights is the ability to play as an original custom character. As you explore the levels, you can use the touch screen to scan more than 35 types of vehicles (some of which are exclusive to either the Autobot or the Decepticon version of the game) and adopt any of them as your alternate mode at any time, as long as you're not in the middle of a mission. You can even customize the color scheme to your liking.



“In addition,” Caminos explains, “we created the custom character's personality to be one that our audience could better relate [to], as well as provide them with a unique personality for each Transformer side. The Autobot C.A.B. [create-a-bot] is like a reckless teenager that likes to show off. The Decepticon C.A.B. is more like the popular kid that's captain of the football team and thinks he can boss everyone around.”

Defeating enemies and completing missions yield experience points (much like in an RPG), and as you level up, your custom robot will earn increased stats and new moves. Before long, you'll be able to use more-powerful weapons, fire projectiles in vehicle mode, and scale buildings that are too tall to jump on.





Starscream has no quams about destroying this truck or using it as weapon.

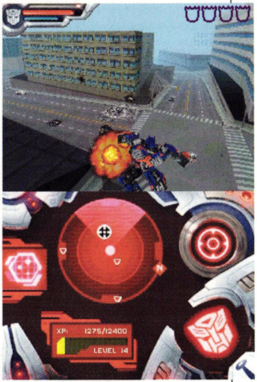
More than Meets the Eye

The games' single-player story modes boast a ton of content in and of themselves—each features 20 unique story missions, 34 optional challenge missions, numerous large environments (including a downtown region, a huge suburban area, and movie locations like Hoover Dam, the Qatar Desert, and the arctic), and an astounding 1,400 lines of top-notch voice work. The cast includes the legendary voice actors for the original Optimus Prime and Megatron (Peter Cullen and Frank Welker, respectively).

But the games also offer local multiplayer competition for up to four players in the form of deathmatch and AllSpark Sports modes. In deathmatch you face off in every-bot-for-himself free-for-alls or team battles, and you can add restrictions like using vehicle forms only. AllSpark Sports is sort of like a Cybertronian version of football, as opposing sides attempt to throw or otherwise maneuver cubes into each other's goals to accumulate points (and beat each other senseless in the process).

Even more promising is the ability to compete in the AllSpark Wars over Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. Though the AllSpark Wars are a series of daily single-player challenges, the results will be tracked online, with the players of the Autobots and the Decepticons versions competing for the high score and a piece of the all-powerful AllSpark. Aside from helping your faction succeed—it takes seven pieces of the AllSpark for either side to claim victory—participation is rewarded with exclusive cheats and vehicle forms.

“We really wanted to expand upon the feeling of being an Autobot or being a Decepticon and the worldwide rivalry between the two factions,” states Caminos.



Primed for Wii

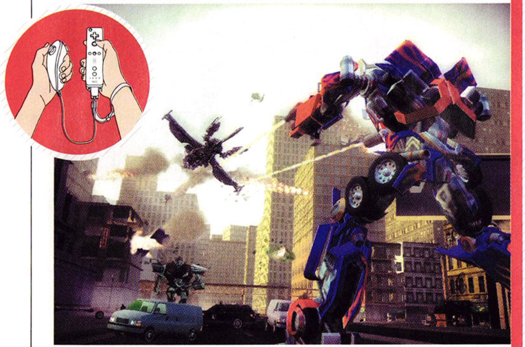
Though the Wii is home to only one Transformers title (simply called Transformers: The Game), it offers plenty of explosive action in its own right. Players can choose from either an Autobot or a Decepticon campaign mode (each with different playable characters and environments), then charge into battle in movie-based scenarios that attempt to truly create the feeling of being a giant, transforming robot.

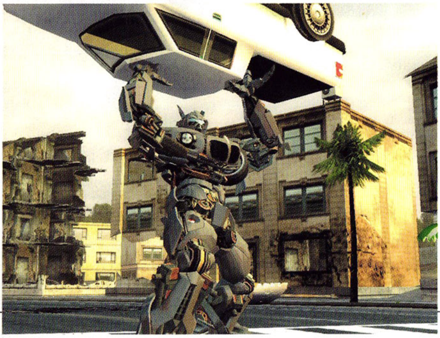
"The robots are massive, powerful soldiers and war veterans," says producer Callum Godfrey, "and when they move, we have tried really hard to get the sense of weight, impact, inertia, and world reactions just right. The powerful physics we use also add the sense of grandeur and mass that we bring to the game. Running down a road, toppling trees, and blowing up anything that gets in your path makes for a convincing giant-robot experience."

Like in the DS version, environmental destruction is a big part of the fun—you can even topple entire buildings—and you can use melee and ranged attacks to wreak havoc. Naturally, the Wii version takes advantage of system-specific controls, such as pointing and aiming with the Wi remote for projectile attacks, and shaking the nunchuk to grab objects or enemies.

The Traveller's Tales-developed game will also feature plenty of mission variety, including loads of robot-versus-robot combat, aerial dogfights, invasion missions, and more. "Some missions will be a chase/shoot-'em-up where the player is in pursuit of an enemy convoy and must use ranged weapons to attack them while driving," Godfrey states. "Another good example is the destruction mission, where as a Decepticon you are tearing down buildings in order to find an object critical to the story." In case that's not enough to make players ready to transform and roll out, Godfrey states the game will feature numerous homages to the original Transformers: Generation 1 series, plus plentiful bonus features that will make longtime fans very happy.

The Transformers have waged many battles since their debut; if the property lives up to expectations, this summer's movie and games could be their most exciting encounters yet.

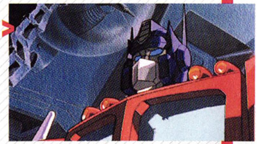




PRIME TIME

Transformers 101

Take one look at the characters of the upcoming *Transformers* film and you'll know that these aren't quite the same robots in disguise that debuted in 1984. But it's definitely not the first time the Transformers have received a facelift; the toy line has gone through many iterations in its 20-plus years.



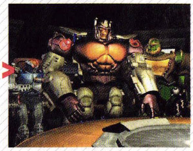
Generation 1 (1984)

This is the one that started it all—the original story of the Transformers coming to Earth to continue their millennia-old conflict.

MARVEL
ALAS, POOR BLUDGEON
TRANSFORMERS
GENERATION 2

Generation 2 (1992)

The Generation 2 toy line consisted primarily of re-released Transformers toys with new paint jobs, and European-exclusive releases.

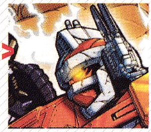


Beast Wars (1995)

When the franchise was reinvented as Beast Wars, the Transformers adopted animals instead of vehicles as their alternate forms.

Beast Machines (1999)

This continuation of Beast Wars featured bizarre character designs and a tale of organic versus mechanical life.

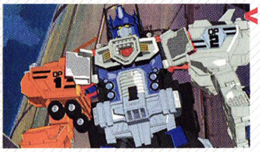


Robots in Disguise (2001)

Robots in Disguise brought Transformers back to its vehicle-based roots. A less-mature tone permeated the series.

Armada (2002)

The concept behind Armada was that the Autobots and Decepticons could collect and utilize Mini-Con robots to gain power.



Energon (2003)

Set 10 years after Armada, this series told an epic tale involving the search for the power source called energon.

Cybertron (2005)

The Armada/Energon saga concluded as the Transformers explored the universe to obtain Cyber Planet Keys.

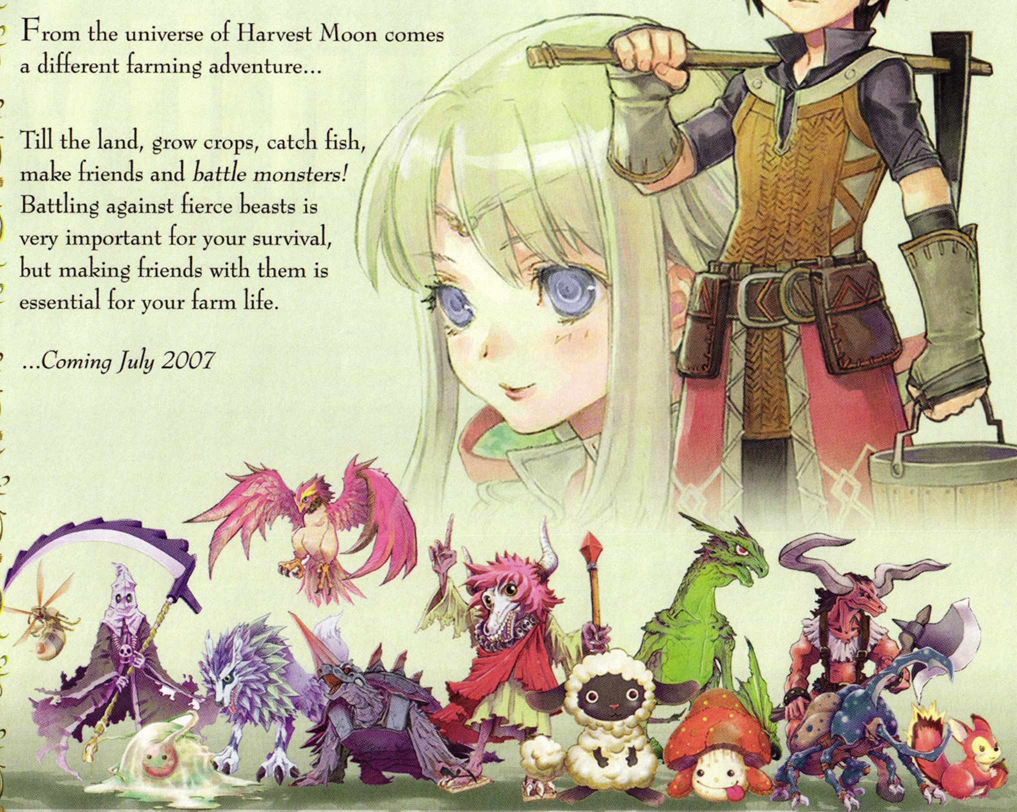
Classics (2006)

This toy line retained the look of classic Transformers characters, but modernized them with more articulation and detail.

Jet Mode
AUTOBOT
JETFIRE
Robot Mode

Rune Factory

A Fantasy Harvest Moon



From the universe of Harvest Moon comes a different farming adventure...

Till the land, grow crops, catch fish, make friends and *battle monsters!* Battling against fierce beasts is very important for your survival, but making friends with them is essential for your farm life.

...Coming July 2007

Tori

I'm so happy··· you made it back··· I was so very worried...

EVERYONE

E

Mild Fantasy Violence

Use of Alcohol

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NINTENDO DS™

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A Legendary Opportunity!

Be the ultimate Pokémon Trainer

with this special DS Lite embossed with Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl's Legendary Pokémon Dialga and Palkia.

NINTENDO POWER

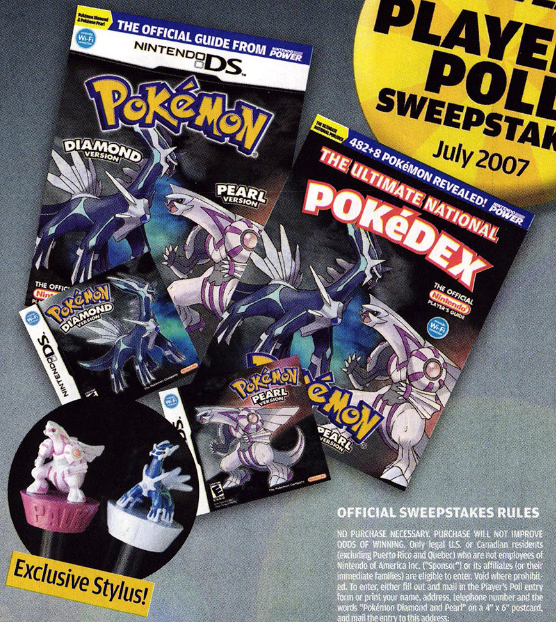
PLAYER'S POLL SWEEPSTAKES

July 2007

GRAND PRIZE

10 WINNERS!

Along with the special Pokémon-themed DS Lite, snag your choice of Pokémon Diamond or Pokémon Pearl, the official Nintendo Power Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl Player's Guide and Pokédex, and a Pokémon stylus.



Exclusive Stylus!

SECOND PRIZE

25 WINNERS!

Find out for yourself what all the Pokémon buzz is about with a copy of either Pokémon Diamond or Pokémon Pearl.

Pokémon DIAMOND VERSION
Pokémon PEARL VERSION
NINTENDO DS

THIRD PRIZE

50 WINNERS!

Take to the street in your 2007 NP T-shirt, and announce that you're ready for any challenge.

Wii
NINTENDO POWER

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EVERYONE
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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NINTENDO POWER
PLAYER'S POLL VOL. 217
P.O. BOX 97062
REDMOND, WA 98073-9762

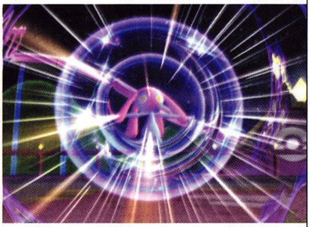
One entry per household. To be eligible to win a prize, entries must be completed and received by Sponsor by 7/01/07 ("Entry Deadline"). Sponsor is not responsible for: (a) late, lost, illegible, or misdirected mail; (b) disruptions or damages due to events beyond Sponsor's control; or (c) printing or typographical errors. On or about 7/20/07, winners will be randomly drawn from all eligible entries received by the Entry Deadline. Canadian entrants may be required to correctly answer a timed skill testing question to claim a prize. Sponsor will attempt to notify winners by mail by 8/20/07. Prizes not claimed within 14 days after notification or which are undeliverable will be forfeited and will not be awarded to an alternate winner. Unless prohibited by law, winners consent to Sponsor's promotional use of their names, likenesses and other personal information without further compensation. Odds of winning depend on total number of eligible entries received. Many will enter, a total of 85 will win. No transfer or substitution of prizes permitted, except that Sponsor may substitute a prize of equal or greater value for any prize. For a copy of these rules, or (after 8/20/07) a list of winners, send your request to the address above. VT residents may omit return postage. Grand Prize: Ten (10) Grand Prize winners will each receive one (1) Pokémon Diamond and Pearl Nintendo DS Lite video game system, and one (1) copy of either Pokémon Diamond or Pokémon Pearl for Nintendo DS, (1) Pokémon Diamond and Pearl European Pre-sell Stylus, (1) Pokémon Diamond and Pearl carrying case, (1) Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl Adventure Guide and (1) Ultimate National Pokédex. Approximate Retail Value (ARV) of Grand prize package is $210.00. Second Prizes: Twenty-five (25) Second Prize winners will each receive one (1) copy of either Pokémon Diamond or Pokémon Pearl for Nintendo DS, (1) Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl Adventure Guide and (1) Ultimate National Pokédex. ARV of second prize is $67.97 each. Third Prizes: Fifty (50) Third Prize winners will each receive one (1) official Nintendo Power T-shirt. ARV of third prize is $10.00 each. Prizes won by minors will be awarded to a parent/legal guardian on their behalf. All prizes are awarded "AS IS" and WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND. Winners (and if winner is a minor his or her parent/legal guardian) may be required to execute an affidavit of eligibility and release of liability as a condition of award. Affidavit not returned to Sponsor within 20 days after notice, will result in prize forfeiture. By entering, you (and, if you are a minor, your parents or legal guardians) release Sponsor, its parent, and their affiliates, directors, officers and employees (collectively, "Released Parties") from any liability for any claims, costs, injuries, losses or damages incurred in connection with the Sweepstakes or any prize (including those related to personal injury, death, damage to property, and rights of publicity or privacy). IF YOU ARE A MINOR, YOUR PARENTS OR LEGAL GUARDIANS AGREE TO INDEMNIFY EACH OF THE RELEASED PARTIES FROM ANY SUCH CLAIMS, COSTS, INJURIES, LOSSES OR DAMAGES SUFFERED BY YOU. Entrants agree to be bound by these Rules and Sponsor's decisions, which are final. Sponsor may change these Rules and/or suspend or cancel the Sweepstakes at any time if causes beyond Sponsor's control affect the administration of the Sweepstakes or Sponsor otherwise becomes (in its sole discretion) incapable of running the Sweepstakes as planned. Any provision of these Rules deemed unenforceable will be enforced to the extent permissible, and the remainder of these Rules will remain in effect. The Sweepstakes and all accompanying materials are Copyright © 2007 by Nintendo of America Inc.

POKéMON
TRIPLE FEATURE

We continue our look at Pokémon Battle Revolution, check out the Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl launch event, and compare all of the Pokémon handheld RPGs. By Chris Shepperd and George Sinfield

Pokétopia? Sounds like fun. I can't say it'll be as fun for my opponents, though!

Pokémon Battle Revolution
Pokémon's Biggest Stage

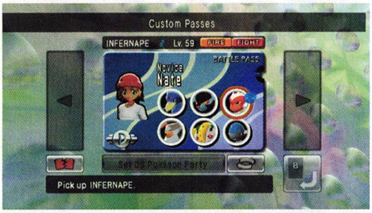


In Pokémon Battle Revolution's Colosseum mode, it's just you, your Pokémon, and the toughest Trainers across the land. Battle your way through a Pokémon-themed amusement park to become the best Pokémon Trainer in the world.

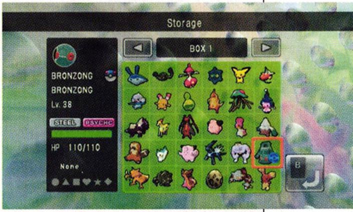
Welcome to Pokétopia

A lot has been made of Pokémon Battle Revolution's multiplayer action, particularly via Wi-Fi, but there's also a huge single-player mode for honing your skills. Pokémon Battle Revolution's Colosseum mode takes place in a theme park called Pokétopia, which expert Trainers consider a utopia for battling one another. Pokétopia serves as a hub for the 10 Colosseums that you can battle in; to become the champion of Pokétopia, you'll have to conquer all of them. The rules for each Colosseum are different, meaning you'll have to learn how to compete in a variety of situations if you want to become the champion. Each Colosseum has a highly skilled Trainer called a Colosseum Leader; you'll recognize them not only because of their masterful combat skills, but also because they wear costumes that look similar to one of the Pokémon in their party. (For example, one Colosseum Leader wears a pointy hat that resembles Lucario's ears.) The glory of winning battle after battle isn't your only reward—on your way to becoming the champion, you'll earn Poké Coupons for every defeat. Pokétopia's shop will trade your winnings for various items and accessories.

Pokétopia may look like all fun and games, but its Colosseums will put your Trainer skills to the test.

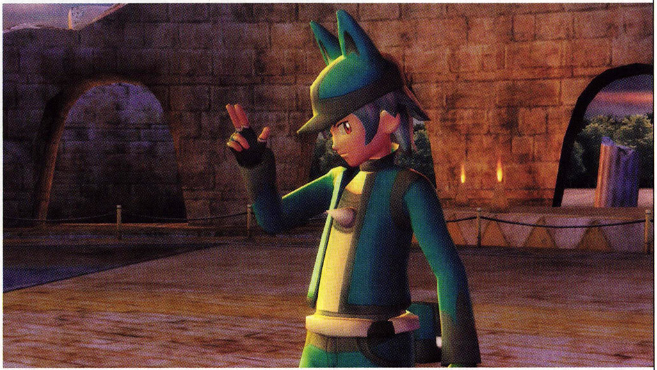


Pick up INFERNAPE.



Battle-Pass Basics

With all the battling you're going to do, you need a way to keep track of your successes. When you begin your charge on Pokétopia's Colosseums, you'll be issued a Battle Pass that displays basic information about you and your party. In addition, you can customize various features of your Battle Pass, such as the background of the pass and the look of your in-game Trainer persona (more on that in the "Get Personal" section). You can also store text phrases that you can use during battle to compliment or taunt your opponent. The more you battle and win, the more designs and options you'll have for customizing your Battle Pass. When you leave Colosseum mode to battle a friend via Wi-Fi, your Battle Pass will be your online representation, as well.



If you take down this Colosseum Leader, you might be walking home with a new Lucario-shaped chapeau.

The first step when you create your Battle Pass is to copy Pokémon from Pokémon Diamond or Pokémon Pearl. From then on, your Battle Pass will recognize only that particular DS game—you won't be able to transfer Pokémon to and from a different game card. Don't worry about choosing the right time to transfer your Pokémon from the DS to the Wii—Diamond and Pearl will synchronize your roster in Pokémon Battle Revolution automatically every time you link up the two games. The method for keeping track of your Pokémon is just like the DS games; there's also a search function for finding the Pokémon you're looking for quickly.

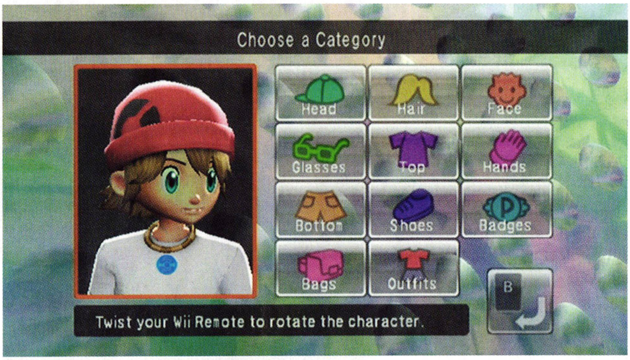
If you don't have Pokémon Diamond or Pokémon Pearl data to use in Pokémon

Battle Revolution, you're not out of luck—you can obtain a special Battle Pass called the Rental Pass that lets you use Pokémon from a preset collection. Your selection of Pokémon in the rental pool is likely to be a little more limited than what you can find in the wild of Sinnoh, but you should be able to put together a potent team to take on the Pokétopia Colosseums. Other than that, your Rental Pass works just like a normal Battle Pass—it keeps track of your wins and losses, the look of your Trainer, and everything else there is to know.

Get Personal

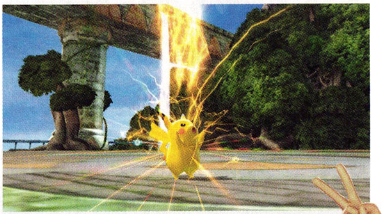
Your Trainer is always visible standing behind your Pokémon during battle—you don't want your Trainer to look like everyone else's! Fortunately, there are all kinds of ways to primp your character. You'll have a limited number of outfits that you can put on your Trainer right away; the rest you'll have to buy or earn. Head to the Pokétopia shop to spend your hard-won Poké Coupons on new clothes, or maybe have your Pokémon convince a Colosseum Leader to lend you his or her outfit.

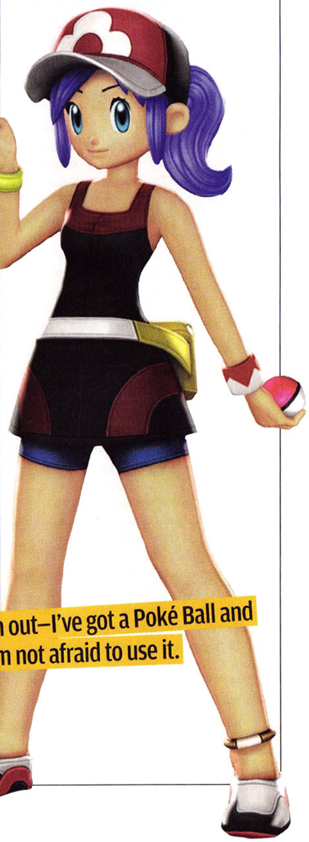
In addition to purchasing new accessories for your Trainer, you can get your hands on a variety of battle items and TMs at the Pokétopia shop. You can then use them during battle—all of the normal rules for using items in Pokémon battles apply in Pokémon Battle Revolution, except when the regulations of a particular Colosseum preempt them. The items that you pick up at the shop can be transferred back to your Diamond or Pearl game—spend your Poké Coupons on items that would be tough to find in Sinnoh. Pokétopia's Colosseum Leaders, Battle Pass, and shop are just some of Pokémon Battle Revolution's highlights. Check out all the awesome things you can do in Pokétopia when the game hits store shelves this June.



Twist your Wii Remote to rotate the character.

There are countless combinations of accessories to personalize your Trainer.





Watch out—I've got a Poké Ball and I'm not afraid to use it.

POKéMON
DIAMOND VERSION
POKéMON
PEARL VERSION
NINTENDO DS
Wi-Fi
EVERYONE
E
ESRB
The Pokémon Company
Nintendo

Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl

Pokémon take NYC

Pokémon Connects with the Big Apple

New York City's mid-April wet weather gave way to pleasant spring sunshine on April 22nd just in time for a day outside Rockefeller Center's Nintendo World store to celebrate the release of Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl. The coincidental timing with Earth Day was appropriate, since the new release allows players to trade Pokémon with each other across the globe for the first time by way of Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. Pokémon fans were out in full force for the proceedings, in a line that extended down 48th street, up 6th avenue, and around the corner to 49th. After the patient players filtered through the store to claim their games, they spilled out into the plaza to join the festivities. A scavenger hunt challenged participants to find clues scattered throughout the center, while a live show introduced attendees to the game's new features and costumed starter Pokémon Turtwig, Chimchar and Piplup. The event also included showings of the movie Pokémon Ranger and the Temple of the Sea and a place for Pokémon Trading Card Game players to face off, along with several kiosks that offered hands-on demos of the new adventure. For those who weren't able to attend, a live webcast on pokemon.com delivered views of the event and an interview with two key members of the Pokémon development team: Director Junichi Masuda and Game Design Leader Shigeru Ohmori. We conducted our own interview with the pair prior to the webcast. Here's what they had to say:

Nintendo Power: What are your thoughts on how Pokémon has managed to enjoy continuing popularity over the years? Are you surprised by how well Pokémon has done in North America?
Junichi Masuda: We're always re-creating Pokémon for new gamers. That's how we've been able to keep it fresh. We are pleasantly surprised about the popularity of the games in the U.S.A. and how the Pokémon characters have been accepted worldwide.

NP: The demographic range of DS users is enormous and includes a lot of people who are new to handheld gaming. How did you account for that growing audience in developing Pokémon Diamond and Pearl?
JM: We did take the large and varied audience for the DS into consideration. We always think about how we can target a wide range of players. Pokémon trading is generally more fun for younger players. That's why we think it's been so popular with that audience. But the main game can be quite complex and suitable for an older group. The new game introduces Wi-Fi connectivity, which may introduce the game to an older audience as well.

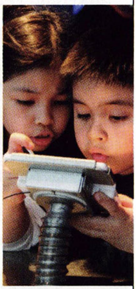
NP: What is the most important difference between Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl and past Pokémon adventures?
JM: Pokémon trading has reached a new level through Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. You can exchange Pokémon from country to country, changing a very important aspect of the Pokémon series.
Shigeru Ohmori: For me, the main difference is the Pokémon world itself. We display it with 3-D graphics for the first time. We also re-establish the concept of day and night, according to what time you play. Additionally, the touch screen gives you a different way to interface with the game. It's a new sense of functionality that we haven't been able to explore before.

NP: Pokémon Diamond and Pearl have more activities that are satellite to the story than any previous titles. What made you go in that more open-ended direction?
SO: The inclusion of aspects such as the underground, Wi-Fi features and minigames make the game more three-dimensional, add more diversity. We wanted to include sub stories and new functions to give the game more depth. We want users to be able to decide how to play the game, rather than for us to demand how they should play.

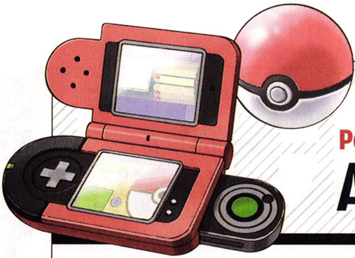
NP: What were your first thoughts on how you would best utilize the DS for a Pokémon adventure?
JM: We found connectivity to be the most interesting thing about the DS and definitely wanted to use it. Pokémon games have a lot to do with being connected through Pokémon trading. We wanted to expand on that idea for this game and concentrate on the communication systems.

NP: Have you found that the Japanese audience approaches Pokémon adventures with different sensibilities than the North American audience?
JM: In Japan, children tend to gather together and play as a group since people tend to be in larger population centers. In the U.S.A. there's more distance between players. We are taking care of that differentiation and building a bridge by bringing Wi-Fi and voice chat to the game.

NP: The Global Trading Station makes the real world as important a place as the Pokémon world. Does that change how you think of Pokémon overall?
JM: I'm really excited about the launch in the U.S.A. and in Europe as well, giving connectivity between Japan, America, and Europe. We don't know what's going to happen.
SO: Children generally don't have a concept of other children playing games in other countries, so this may open up their ideas about people around the world.



POKéMON
POKéMON
POKéMON

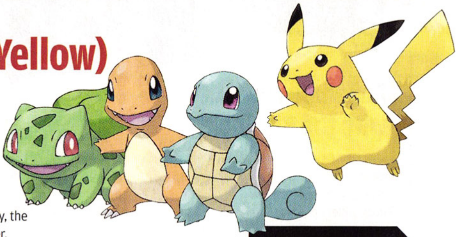


Pokémon Handheld RPGs

A Trainer's History

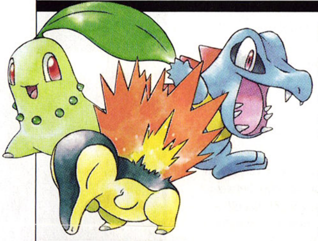
Pokémon Versions:

Red and Blue / Special Edition (Yellow)



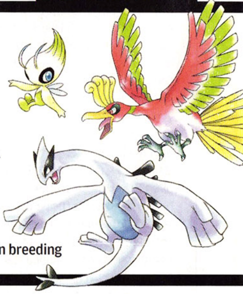
- **Platform:** Game Boy
- **Starter Pokémon:** Bulbasaur, Charmander, Squirtle, and Pikachu (Yellow only)
- **Total Number of Pokémon:** 150+1 (Mew)
- **Region:** Kanto
- **Legendary Pokémon:** Articuno, Zapdos, Moltres, Mewtwo, and Mew
- **Game Connectivity:** Trade and battle via Game Link Cable
- **Game Contributions:** Introduction of Pokédex
  The original Pokémon games laid the groundwork for all future Pokémon RPGs. Most notably, the Pokédex was created to help keep track of the many Pokémon that Trainers would encounter.

Sept. 1998 / Nov. 1999



Pokémon Versions:

Gold and Silver / Crystal



- **Platform:** Game Boy Color
- **Starter Pokémon:** Chikorita, Cyndaquil, and Totodile
- **Total Number of Pokémon:** 250+1 (Celebi)
  Trainers could expand their Pokédex by trading with Red, Blue, and Yellow versions.
- **Regions:** Johto and Kanto
- **Game Extras:** Lottery, Pokégear
- **New Legendary Pokémon:** Raikou, Entei, Suicune, Lugia, Ho-oh, and Celebi
- **Game Connectivity:** Trade and battle via Game Link Cable
- **Game Contributions:** Real time day/night feature, held items and Pokémon breeding

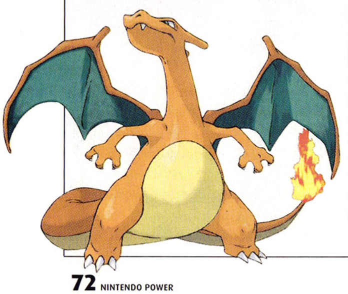
Oct. 2000 / July 2001

Pokémon Versions:

Ruby and Sapphire / Emerald

- **Platform:** Game Boy Advance
- **Starter Pokémon:** Treecko, Mudkip, and Torchic
- **Total Number of Pokémon:** 200 in Hoenn Pokédex +2 (Jirachi and Deoxys)
- **Region:** Hoenn
- **Game Extras:** Contests and Battle Frontier (Emerald only)
- **New Legendary Pokémon:** Latias, Latios, Kyogre, Groudon, Rayquaza, Deoxys, Regirock, Regice, Registeel and Jirachi
- **Game Connectivity:** Trade and battle via Game Link Cable, Contest, and Union Room
  The introduction of the Union Room further expanded the idea of the Pokémon community.
- **Game Contributions:** Natures, Abilities, and Double Battles

Mar. 2003 / May 2005

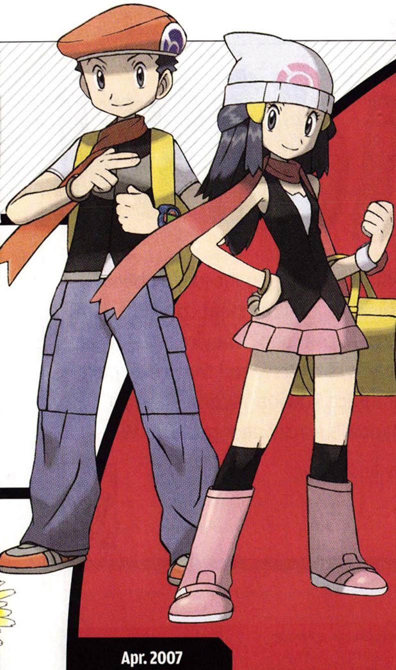


Pokémon Versions:

FireRed and LeafGreen

- **Platform:** Game Boy Advance
- **Starter Pokémon:** Bulbasaur, Charmander, and Squirtle
- **Total Number of Pokémon:** 386 in the National Pokédex
- **Pokémon Region:** Kanto
- **Game Extras:** Sevii Islands
- **New Legendary Pokémon:** Deoxys (Normal, Attack, and Defense Formes)
- **Game Connectivity:** Wireless Adapter (wireless trading)
- **Game Contributions:** National Pokédex
  The new National Pokédex created a unified system for cataloging Kanto and Johto Pokémon.

Sept. 2004

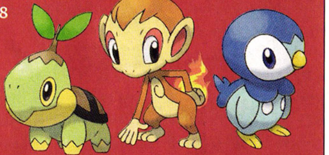


Apr. 2007

Pokémon Versions:

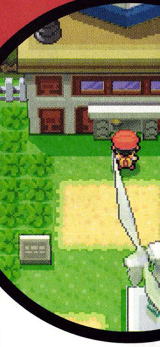
Diamond and Pearl

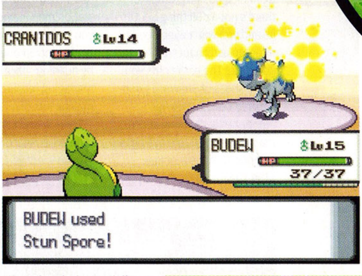
- **Platform:** Nintendo DS
- **Starter Pokémon:** Turtwig, Chimchar, Piplup
- **Total Number of Pokémon:** 482+8
  Over 100 new Pokémon were added in Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl. Trainers import Pokémon via the DS's dual-slot function to consolidate every Pokémon in one game.



- **Region:** Sinnoh
- **Game Extras:** Battle Zone and Super Contest
- **Legendary Pokémon:** Uxie, Mesprit, Azelf, Dialga, Palkia and more
- **Game Connectivity:** Wireless Trading, The Underground, Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, and Global Trade Station
  Building on Ruby and Sapphire's Union Room and FireRed and LeafGreen's wireless capabilities, Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl implemented a host of connectivity features for Pokémon players. Wi-Fi and Global Trade Station features put Pokémon on a global scale.
- **Game Contributions:** New attacks, touch-screen controls, new devices
  Fundamental enhancements were made to the Pokémon series, including touch-screen functions, changes to the battle system, 3-D graphics, and a versatile new Trainer device called the Pokétch.

Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl combine all the best features of past games.





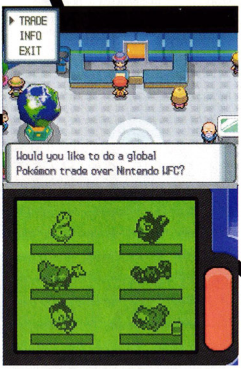
CRANIDOS Lv14

BUDEW Lv15 37/37

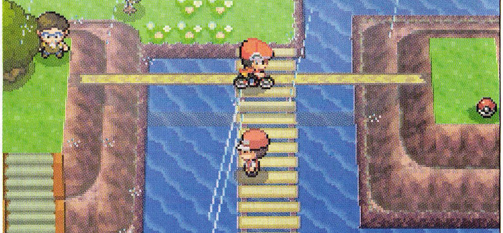
BUDEW used Stun Spore!

The Pokétch device follows in the footsteps of the PokéGear and the PokéNav to aid Trainers on their journeys. New touch-screen functionality enables complete ease of use.

Complete 3-D renderings of the overworld give Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl a more realistic and immersive appearance.

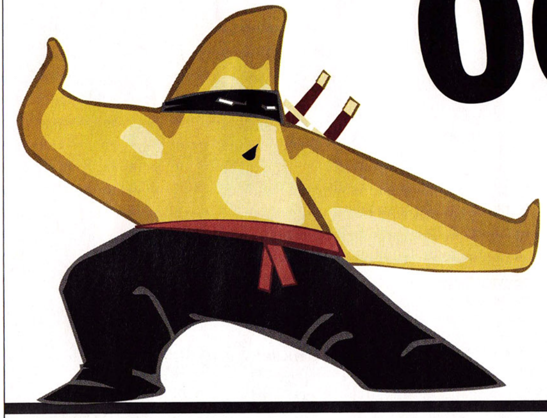


Would you like to do a global Pokémon trade over Nintendo WFC?



FIRST HANDS ON!

Space Oddity



What do hippie seahorses, rubber chickens, and rampant consumerism have in common? They're all in outer space, of course, and they're all part of **Space Station Tycoon**—Namco Bandai's wacky new game for Wii.

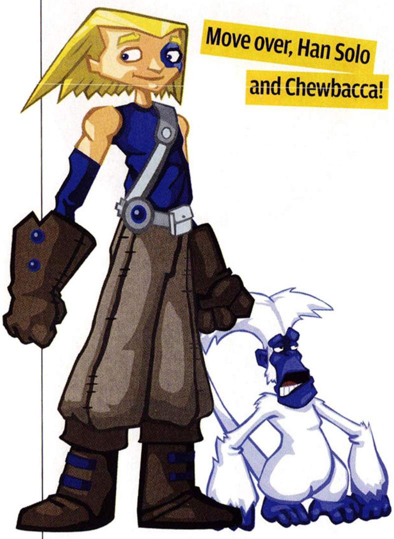
By Andy Myers

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

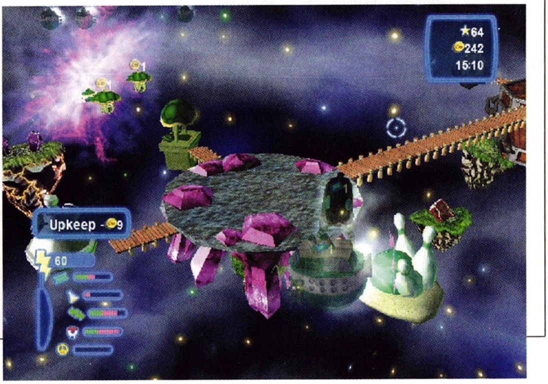
Seeing Stars

The idea of traveling to outer space is mysterious and exciting, but if you actually got there it would probably be pretty darn boring. Well, not in Space Station Tycoon. From fending off space pirates to building a business empire, there's not a dull thing about it—and you won't even need to undergo astronaut training to get there! The game puts you in the shoes of Shawn, a good-natured (and somewhat empty-headed) young spaceman and his irritable business partner, Tam the monkey. After their home is destroyed, the duo winds up floating through empty space in a bathtub, stranded and hopelessly broke. Luckily, they cross paths with a party pig named Marv, who presents the pair with an opportunity to try their hand at space-station management. It's up to you to move Shawn and Tam up the entrepreneurial ladder by building space stations, managing resources, and making lots of money.

Though the name implies otherwise, Space Station Tycoon is not your typical Tycoon game. It's actually structured more like an adventure game, with levels and goals to complete. The levels are laid out in a very nonlinear fashion, and each one contains multiple scenarios (so you'll have to play through an area more than once to complete it). Finishing a scenario usually involves building islands then constructing very odd expansions on the ports of each island to attract spaceship passersby. You're given a birds-eye view of the action, and you must decide what to build and where. This is where the game


Move over, Han Solo and Chewbacca!

Shawn & Tam
Space Station Tycoon's dynamic duo couldn't be more opposite. Shawn is an eternal optimist, while Tam is often depressed. Shawn fears otters, whereas Tam fears nothing. Shawn has a tiny bladder, and Tam once threw poop competitively. So there you have it.

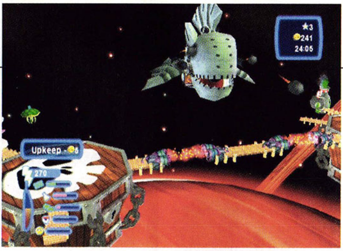


SPACESTATION TYCOON™ © 2007 NAMCO BANDAI Games America Inc. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

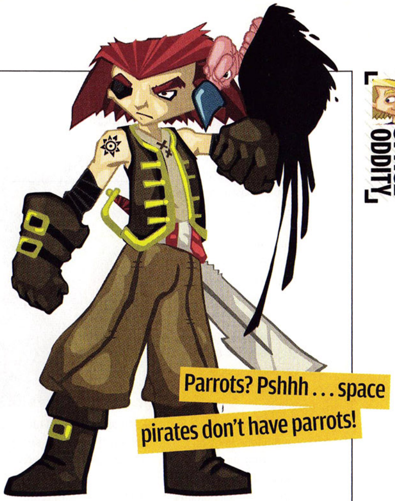
gets tricky—there are many different types of islands and expansions, and each can serve your business strategy in a different way. Entertainment islands, for instance, are well-suited to expansions such as bowling alleys and ice rinks, while flea markets will thrive on trade islands.

To build expansions you'll need two things: power and money. You accrue power (not the metaphysical kind, but the *actual* kind) by building power-station expansions. Once a power station has generated enough power, you can use your earnings to construct more-lucrative expansions (such as entertainment expansions) and start bringing in some business. The ultimate goal is usually to be making dough, but there are many ways to go about doing that. The general structure of the game is fairly complex, but it also does a nice job of ramping up the options and difficulty—for instance, by requiring that you have a plan for any expansion you want to build. You'll receive plans periodically from Marv and other strange space-dwellers (usually of the talking-animal variety), and you won't get your hands on a particular plan until you actually need it.

Like any business, space-station management is all about making the customer happy. This plays out through the game's demand system. There are five types of demand: Entertainment, Science, Trade, Underworld, and Health. You'll need to keep track of what each customer wants, and build the proper expansions to meet changing demands. It's a cutthroat industry—neglecting demand or making a poor decision can lose you a lot of money in a jiffy. But that's part of what makes Space Station Tycoon fun, despite the stress. And besides, how seriously can you take yourself when your boss is a talking pig?



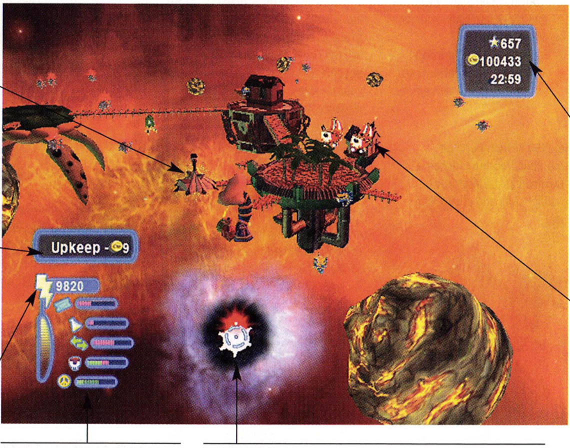
Boss battles in a Tycoon game? Yep, and they're about as weird as you can imagine.


Parrots? Pshhh . . . space pirates don't have parrots!

Nash
Not only is Nash king of the space pirates; he's also Shawn's evil twin stepbrother! (How that genealogy works, we're not quite sure.) Little-known facts: Nash doesn't remember getting his tattoo, and his favorite animal is the miniature poodle.

Station Identification

By now you might be wondering what the heck is going on in these screenshots. Here's a breakdown:



Expansions
Expansions of all shapes and sizes can be built on the ports of your islands.

Upkeep
Expansions cost money—especially those generating a lot of income. If you can't meet your overall upkeep cost, you'll lose the mission.

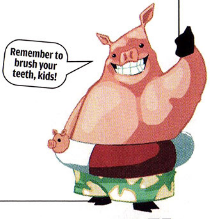
Power
To keep things running, you'll need power. The more power stations you've built, the more power you'll have at your disposal.

Points, Money, and Time
The more money you have, the more stuff you can build. But you'd better do it in the allotted time, or you'll fail at the mission.

Customers
If you build it, they will come . . . customers, that is. With the right expansions, your space station will be hoppin' with business.

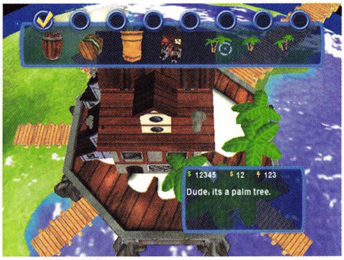
Consumer Demand
Customers are finicky, and it's your job to keep them happy. These five meters show you what the people want and whether you're meeting their demands.

Gravity Well
This tool allows you to manipulate gravity itself by pointing the Wii remote. You'll use the Gravity Well for many tasks, including nudging consumers in the right direction or clearing space debris (such as asteroids, empty cans, tires, or even rubber chickens).


Remember to brush your teeth, kids!

Tool of the Trade

To become the most powerful tycoon in all of known space, you'll need to master one tool and one tool alone: the Wii remote. The largest chunk of the game is played using the Wii remote to navigate your station and select items, but there's much more to it than just pointing and clicking—there's twisting, flicking, and shaking as well. Join us for the first-ever hands-on look at Space Station Tycoon and its many quirks.



Each of the game's menus are tailored to Wii-remote functionality, including this one, which allows you to decorate an island with found items.

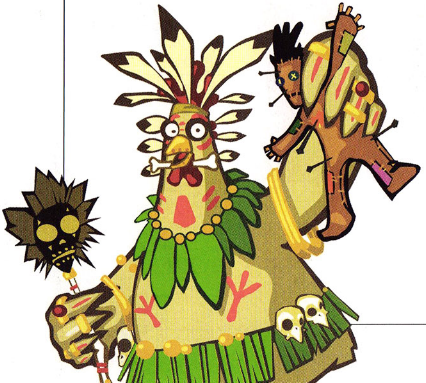
After the game kicks off with a genuinely funny and insanely fast-paced cutscene, your first mission will begin. You'll start by building some islands, which you can rotate on an axis by simply twisting the Wii remote before you plop an island into its permanent place. This feature plays a big part in your strategy, as islands will be connected by bridges automatically when aligned properly. And a bridge will ultimately increase customer traffic on both islands. Each island comes with a handful of ports on which you can build expansions. Every expansion begins as a wooden crate, and will not be operational until all of its parts arrive. You can speed up the arrival by gathering incoming parts with the Wii remote—once all the parts are in place, you must grab the crate and shake it to open your expansion to the public. There are a ton of expansions in the game, and you can interact with each one using a custom interface. For example, selecting a bowling alley will bring up a funky control panel full of switches that allows you to turn lanes on and off. The more lanes you turn on, the more appeal your bowling alley will have—but more lanes also means more upkeep.

Islands and expansions offers a ton of cool ways to interact with the Wii remote, but none are as cool as the Gravity Well. Once you receive this essential item, you can activate it at any time by pointing at an area and pressing the B Button. The Gravity Well allows you to manipulate the action in a variety of ways: If some space debris is blocking an area where you wish to build an island, for instance, you can clear the trash with the Gravity Well. Or if a customer is lollygagging around your station, you can draw him into an expansion to get him to start spending. In later levels, the Gravity Well will become an integral part of your strategy, especially during the game's bizarre boss battles, in which you can often use surrounding space debris to block attacks on your station.

We spent a couple of hours playing Space Station Tycoon, and we left feeling like we'd scarcely scratched the game's surface. Space Station Tycoon is expansive (though not quite as expansive as outer space itself), with more than 60 levels to complete on your way to universal domination. And it doesn't have to be a solitary affair—at any time, another player can join in for some co-op action by simply turning on his Wii remote. You can try your hand at space-station management this August—in the meantime, try watching reruns of *The Apprentice* to prepare.

Voodoo Chicken

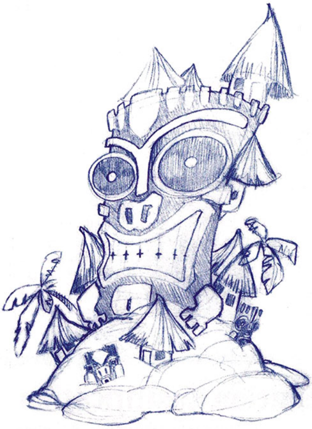
Having abandoned his real name (Sir Melvin Percival Smith) for a more descriptive moniker, Voodoo Chicken is not one to be trifled with. But he also has a soft side, as illustrated by his two hobbies: calligraphy and crocheting (with voodoo needles, of course).



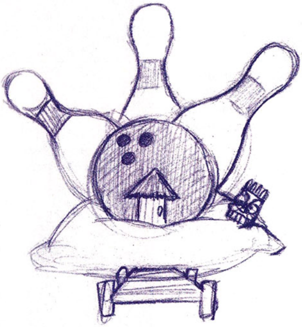
REALITY CHECK

Back to the Drawing Board

Every game has to start somewhere—even a game as far out as Space Station Tycoon. We checked in with Brent Fox, the art director/project manager at Wahoo Studios (see last month's NP for an extensive interview), to comment on some of the game's early sketches.



"This is some early concept art for a tricked-out entertainment island. Get the right items, and this fabulous island retreat can be yours!"

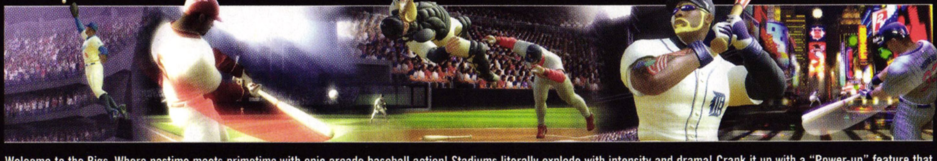


"Here we have concept art for the bowling alley, where dreams are made and crushed daily. It's also the cornerstone of the entertainment tech tree."

2K SPORTS

TIGERS
Comerica Park
I Live for This
MLBPLAYERS.COM
PUJOLS 5
SECURIBANK
THE BIGS
BUST OUT THE BIG LUMBER.
Dodgers
Cardinals 5

EXCITEMENT. ACTION. DRAMA. THIS IS THE BIGGEST GAME IN TOWN.



Welcome to the Bigs. Where pastime meets primetime with epic arcade baseball action! Stadiums literally explode with intensity and drama! Crank it up with a "Power-up" feature that helps you launch tape measure, seat-seeking missiles. Or play the Rookie Challenge mode that lets you guide a player from spring training rook all the way to World Series megawatt MVP!

2K BEATS: Jane's Addiction, Motorhead, Fu Manchu, Primus, Killing Joke, Rollins Band, White Zombie, Primus, Satellite Party, Screaming Trees and The Stooges

WWW.2KSPORTS.COM/THEBIGS

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Visit www.esrb.org for updated rating information.

PLAYSTATION 3

XBOX 360 XBOX LIVE

Wii

Also available on PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system and the PSP®(PlayStation®Portable) system.

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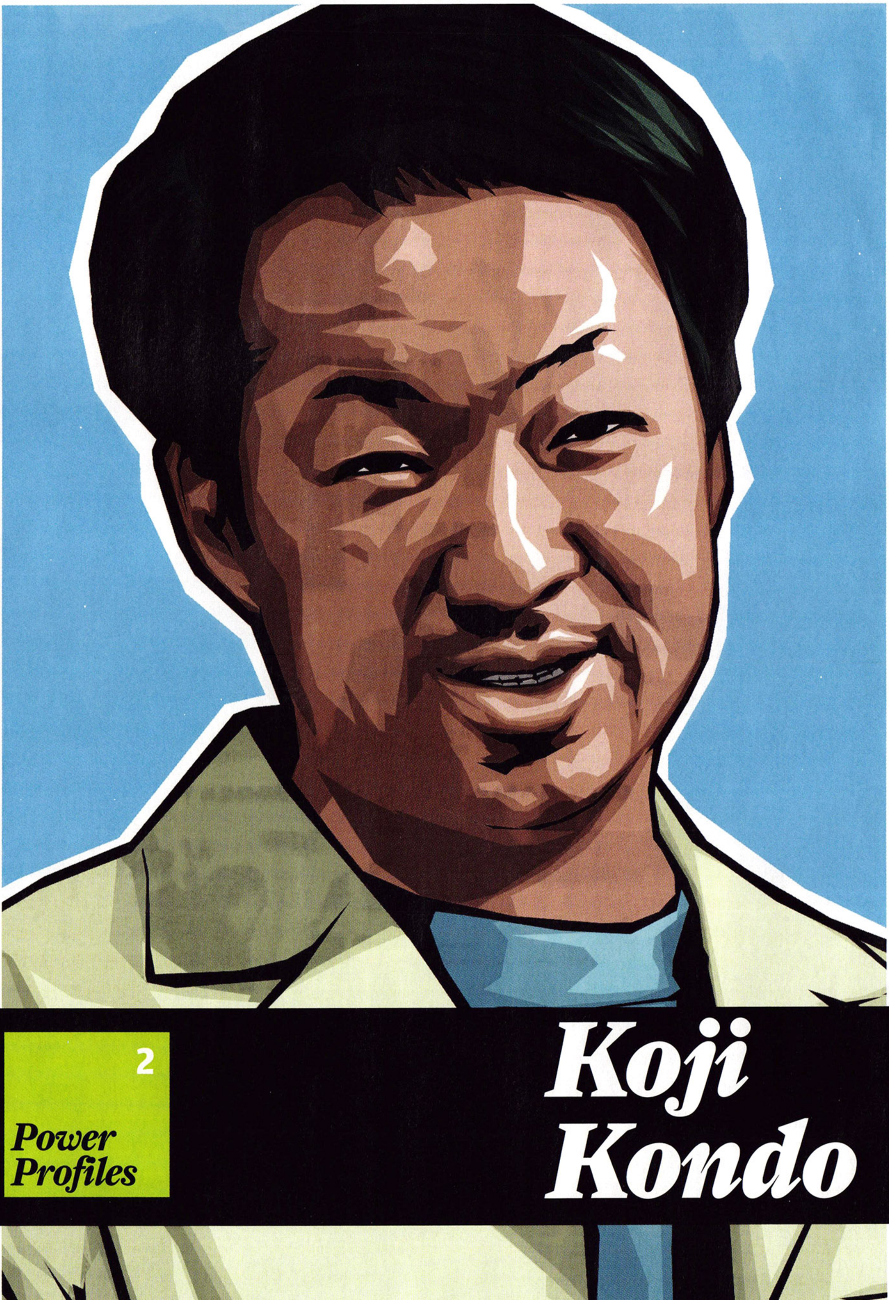


2

Power Profiles

Koji Kondo

When considering a video game's presentation, people tend to focus primarily on the visual aspects. But it's often the music that stays with us, that triggers memories of our favorite gaming moments even years later. Case in point: the frequently memorable work of renowned Nintendo composer Koji Kondo.

Kondo has worked at the big N for over two decades, and if you've been playing games since the '80s, chances are you can hum at least one of his tunes from as far back as the NES days, be it the whimsical underwater score from Super Mario Bros. or the rousing opening theme from The Legend of Zelda. Just as Shigeru Miyamoto is often called the father of modern game design, Kondo could rightly be dubbed the father of modern game sound. He was instrumental in pushing the art form beyond simple beeps and bloops, creating audio that truly augments gameplay and sets the tone for the experience. His music has struck such a chord with gamers, in fact, that the original Super Mario Bros. theme remains one of the ten best-selling ringtones after a record-setting 132 weeks on the Billboard charts. Today, in addition to creating his own compositions, Kondo manages Nintendo's entire sound group and oversees the musical scores for almost all of the company's major titles.

DATE OF BIRTH:
August 13, 1961

BIRTHPLACE:
Nagoya, Japan

POSITION:
Manager, Sound Group, Nintendo Entertainment Analysis and Development (EAD)

BEST KNOWN FOR:
Composing music and creating sound effects for the Mario and Zelda series

FAVORITE FOOD:
Thai curry

CURRENT PROJECTS:
Super Mario Galaxy, Wii Music

Nintendo Power: Can you tell us how you got into the video game business?
Koji Kondo: I began playing music when I was five years old. I started with an electric organ, then moved on and learned how to play the piano and whatnot. As I got older, I became very interested in tabletop arcade games. I played a lot of those and played some portable stuff, some of the LCD games. That interest in games and the interest in creating sounds led me to apply for and get a job at Nintendo.

NP: When you were a kid, did you know that you wanted to create music? What did you want to be when you grew up?
KK: By the time I got to college, I thought I wanted to do something music-related. However, I just never felt I was qualified or talented enough to become a performer or a composer. So I thought, "Well, maybe I could do something related to music, like working in a sound studio or setting things up for concerts." Maybe do something related to the engineering or more technical aspects of music.

NP: Was there a particular moment when you realized that you *could* actually create music?
KK: Pretty much after they hired me at Nintendo and told me to make something. [Laughs] They hired me to work on their sound staff, and after I had the opportunity to create some music, I thought, "You know, that wasn't half bad." Then I created a little bit more, and over the years I've just gradually improved my skill set.

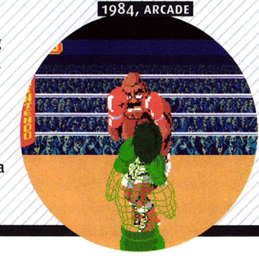
NP: Can you talk a bit about your process of composing the soundtrack for a video game? Do you get game footage or builds of the game, and then compose pieces for particular segments after you see them?
KK: Basically what we do is, when games are about midway through their development cycle, my staff will meet with the game director. The game director will show us parts of the game, and whichever parts are playable, we'll play them over and over and over. That, in addition to what the director tells us, helps us create an image of what the game is like. Then we'll start composing music and start creating sounds that match the image we've developed through that process.

NP: Do you take a different approach for different kinds of games? Is the process for creating a Mario score different than for a Zelda score?
KK: Well, the process itself is really the same. With Mario, though, what I try to do is create music that

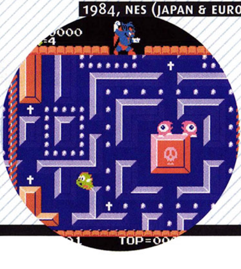
> *"I just never felt I was qualified or talented enough to become a performer or a composer. . . . [But Nintendo] hired me to work on their sound staff, and after I had the opportunity to create some music, I thought, 'You know, that wasn't half-bad.'"*

GAMEOGRAPHY

Like Miyamoto, Kondo began his career working on a beloved arcade title. Since then, he's lent his considerable talents to dozens of titles, working primarily alongside Miyamoto. Here are just a few of his works.



PUNCH-OUT!!
1984, ARCADE



DEVIL WORLD
1984, NES (JAPAN & EUROPE)

SUPER MARIO BROS.
1985, NES

reflects the feel of control, the feel of playing the game. So when I'm playing a Mario action game, there are times when it just feels right. You're pushing the buttons and things are happening right away. So we look at music that fits that internal rythym or reflects that feeling. With Zelda, the music isn't so much about matching the gameplay but rather enhancing the ambience of a particular scene or building the feeling for a certain location.

> **"From the beginning, the purpose of game sound has been to enhance gameplay, to make the game more enjoyable for the player. That's not changed a bit. So my goal has always been the same and it always will be."**

NP: How have things changed since you first started composing music for video games? Do you approach things differently given that there are fewer hardware limitations than there used to be?
KK: Well, let's start backwards and look at the NES. WIth that system you, of course, had very limited sound sources . . . maybe three or four. Trying to use those to imitate the sounds of different instruments was a big hardship. Now, of course, you can create pretty much any sound you want. It's so close to just creating your own CD, and you can cover any genre of music, as well. So that's one thing that's a lot easier, but on the other hand, it does increase the pressure on me to support that. [Laughs] You have all of these extra capabilities, but you have to write a lot more to take advantage of them. So it's a double-edged sword.

NP: Aside from those technical considerations, has your philosophy changed at all over the years? Are there any lessons that you've learned from your previous experiences that you apply to new projects?
KK: Well, you know, it really hasn't changed that much. From the beginning, the purpose of game sound has been to enhance gameplay, to make the game more enjoyable for the player. That's not changed a bit. So my goal has always been the same and it always will be.

NP: Out of everything that you've composed, what's your favorite piece of music?
KK: That's a tough question. It's so hard to choose from all of the different music that I've been lucky enough to create over the years. But if I have to choose one, I guess it'd be the first Super Mario Bros. theme. Part of the reason for choosing that is that it seems to be the one that . . . you know, it's been over 20 years and it's still popular with the fans. It's the one that people seem to like, and it's probably my favorite as well.

NP: Are you a fan of anyone else's work in the industry? Is there a score for a game that you've heard and said, "Wow, that was pretty amazing"?
KK: Well, if you go with composers, I'd say Mr. Sugiyama for Dragon Quest and Mr. Uematsu for Final Fantasy. Those are two people who I think are really talented and do great work. As far as game sound, looking at it from what I think is most important, which is that interactive quality, I think Chibi Robo is just fantastic.

NP: When trying to come up with musical compositions, what inspires you?
KK: The games themselves. When they bring the game in and we get to look at it and talk about it. It's the impression that we get from seeing the graphics onscreen, and trying to envision what kind of music would enhance this or what kind of music would highlight this feeling that I get when I see it or play it. That's really my inspiration.

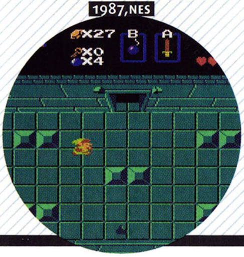
NP: What are your favorite types of music to listen to?
KK: I like listening to a lot of jazz and Latin music. Lately I've been starting to listen to more and more classical music as well.

NP: Whose works in other forms of media, such as film or literature, do you most admire or enjoy?
KK: I like all kinds of different things. When it comes to films, I really enjoy the human dramas much more than the big action or sci-fi films. Maybe something with a little romance, something that's more related to humanity. As far as another hero, someone I aspire to be like as a composer is Henry Mancini. He did such wonderful music across so many genres. He covered everything, and created a lot of memorable melodies. That's something I continually aspire to do as well.

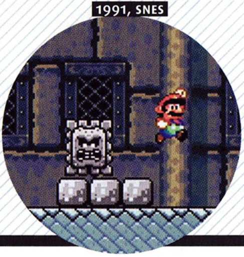
NP: Aside from music, what is your favorite hobby or pastime?
KK: I love going to hot springs. [Laughs]

NP: Finally, if you could have one superpower, what would it be?
KK: Hmm . . . I would have to say time travel.

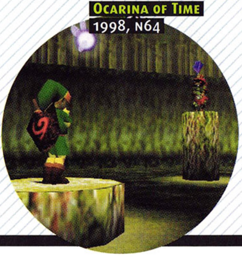
THE LEGEND OF ZELDA
1987, NES



SUPER MARIO WORLD
1991, SNES

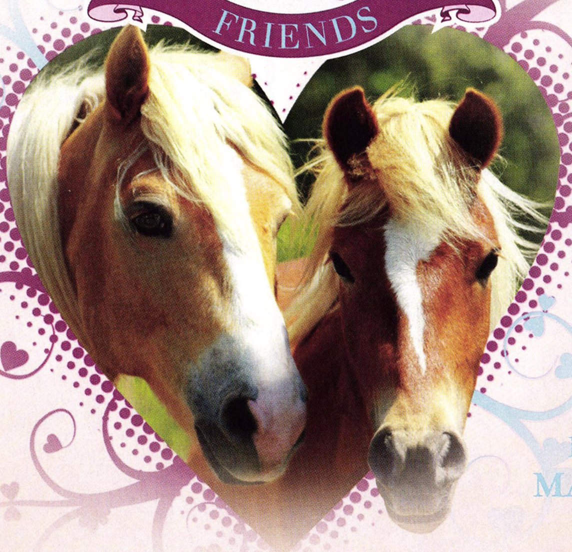


THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME
1998, N64



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: TWILIGHT PRINCESS
2006, Wii/GCN

PONY FRIENDS



IN STORES
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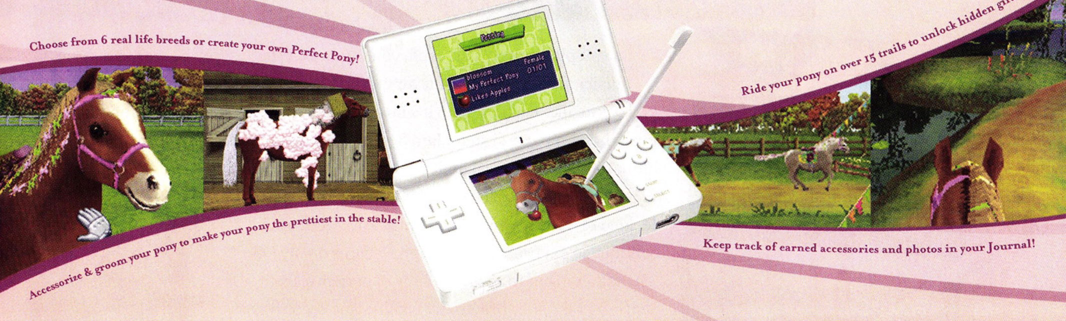

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NINTENDO DS
TANTALUS
eidos

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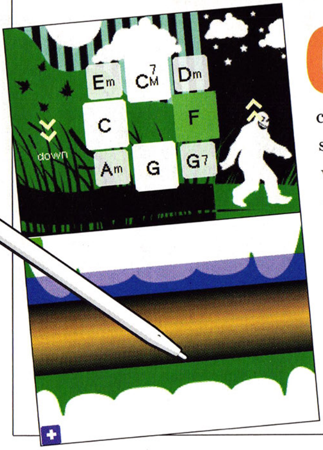
NO STRINGS ATTACHED

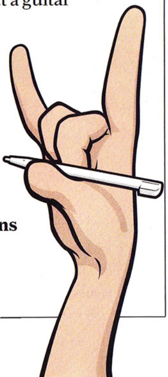
We put Ubisoft's revolutionary DS guitar, Jam Sessions, to the ultimate test.

By Andy Myers

JARED—BASS
ANDY—DS
ERIC—DRUMS



Can you play guitar? No? Well, you can now. Whether you're a seasoned musician or a master of the air guitar, Jam Sessions will soon have you rockin' like Dokken with it's intuitive touch-screen strumming and clever chord-change system. Jam Sessions is not a game, but a guitar simulator—and a surprisingly realistic one at that. After we received a copy of the title at Nintendo Power, I decided to hang up my actual guitar for a week and conduct an experiment with Jam Sessions on my DS. The following is an account of my experience, from learning the ropes to actually writing and recording a song with my band, Hidari Mae. To hear the music we created, visit **www.nintendopower.com/jamsessions** for a free download. Let the rock begin!

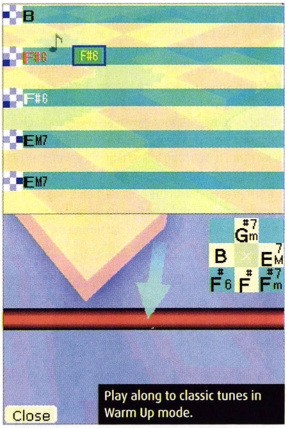


Photography By James Catechi

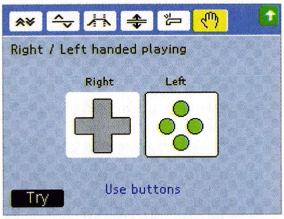
Class in Session

Learning to play a new instrument isn't always easy. Although Jam Sessions has a clever pick-up-and-play interface, it does take some time to wrap your head around its nuances. If you already know how to play guitar, you may be surprised by how different the interface is from six steel-core strings. Luckily, Jam Sessions is loaded with options that let you customize the learning experience. To start with, I changed the control configuration to a left-handed setting so I could access the touch screen with my left hand, freeing up my right hand for chord changes. Changing chords feels almost instinctive—you simply press buttons or button combinations while strumming with the stylus. There were many more options to explore, but I was ready to rock, so I left them for another time.

I started with the Jam Sessions tutorial. A particularly helpful tip suggested strumming diagonally rather than straight up and down, a quick adjustment that helped me on my way to achieving the sound I wanted. There are a number of ways to listen to your progress in Jam Sessions, from using the DS's onboard speakers to connecting the DS to a guitar amp. Because the software's biggest asset is its portability, however, I usually opted for headphones. And truthfully, my playing was a little rough and I didn't want to offend the ears of innocent bystanders. Playing guitar on my DS made it possible for me to write and practice guitar riffs at home, on the bus—even at a local coffee shop. A word of advice: don't rock out too hard in public places. If you have your foot up on the bus bench like it's a monitor wedge and you start throwing the rock horns to an imaginary sold-out stadium crowd . . . you may get some weird looks from your fellow commuters. I found that I could privately release my inner rock star in Warm Up mode, which let me play along to some familiar tunes. Unfortunately, there's no "Stairway to Heaven." Bummer.

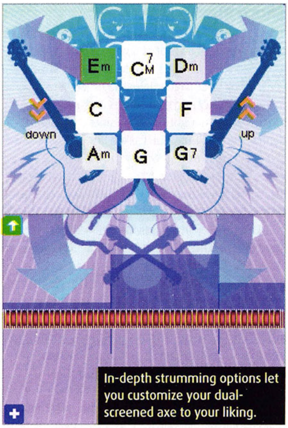


Play along to classic tunes in Warm Up mode.



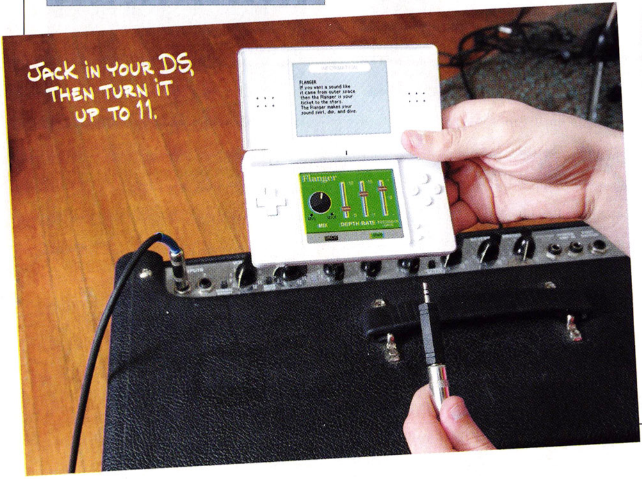
No Pick Required

Once the rock gods were appeased, it was time to tighten up my playing. The stylus makes strumming supereasy, but there are still a lot of options and techniques to explore. If I strum only downward, for instance, it sounds repetitive (which can be cool in a Coldplay sort of way); but when I throw in some upward strums, the playing comes to life. And if I strum slowly, the guitar is quiet—this would work well for '80s ballads, but I wanna rock, so quicker stylus strokes were in order. I found that varying both my speed and my strumming direction made for a more natural sound.

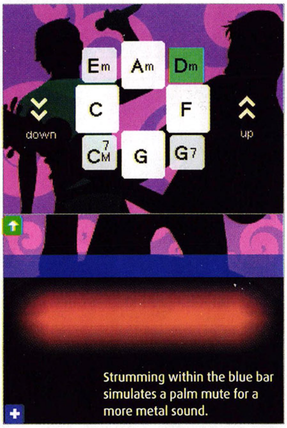


In-depth strumming options let you customize your dual-screened axe to your liking.

Jam Sessions has oodles of options to customize your strumming experience. I'm a big fan of the "jugh-jugh" strum (that's what we call it in Hidari Mae—in the real world, it's called a palm mute), so I keep the option on at all times. When you choose to use palm muting in the software, a blue bar appears on the touch screen—if I strum within that bar, a palm mute is activated. Alternating between palm mutes and full strums took my playing to the next level and made for a much more dynamic sound. Once I had the technique down, I started to feel comfortable with the DS app in a way I never thought possible. I spent the next few days devouring everything Jam Sessions had to offer, which led to some incredibly productive sessions in which a song began to take form. I started to wonder, could the simulator work in a band environment, taking the place of a real guitar? I had to find out. Next stop: band practice!



JACK IN YOUR DS, THEN TURN IT UP TO 11.



Strumming within the blue bar simulates a palm mute for a more metal sound.

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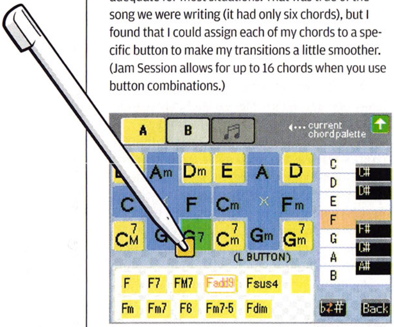
Chord Play

Playing in a band is a lot like being in a romantic relationship—you spend a lot of time with each other, and if you can't put up with a certain amount of hostility, you'll break up sooner or later. I'm lucky that my band mates are pretty easygoing dudes and our practice space has been a fight-free zone since the last presidential election. But when I asked Eric and Jared if we could try replacing my '69 Gibson SG with a DS, there was . . . some resistance. After a lengthy band meeting (complete with groveling and bribes), it was decided that we would try out the new instrument.

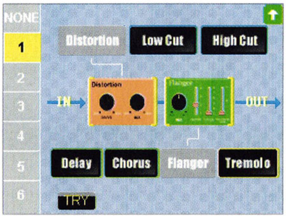
We set up shop in Eric's living room—drums, bass, a vocal mic, and my DS. I used an adapter (picked up at Radio Shack) to run my DS through a Fender DeVille amp with a standard instrument cable. It wasn't until that moment that I was truly sold on Jam Sessions—it sounded unbelievable through the amp! I'd been playing on my own so much that it took a few minutes to lock into a groove with Eric and Jared, but once we clicked, I knew this was going to work out well.

We jammed for a while on the song I'd been writing until the pieces started coming together. I realized that I hadn't yet messed around with changing chords outside of the software's presets. Most songs use but a handful of basic chords, so the default setting is adequate for most situations. That was true of the song we were writing (it had only six chords), but I found that I could assign each of my chords to a specific button to make my transitions a little smoother. (Jam Session allows for up to 16 chords when you use button combinations.)



Finding Our Sound

Practice was fun, but recording was going to be the true test. Would Jam Sessions cut it in place of a real guitar? Eric helmed the boards as we began laying down our song track-by-track in Pro Tools, starting with drums. When it came time to record with the DS, we decided that the sound we'd achieved through the guitar amp was best, but something still wasn't quite right. It was time to start messing with one of Jam Sessions' coolest features: effects pedals! There are seven available in the options menu, and we thought a tiny bit of distortion would add some sauce to our song. With the pedal turned on, Eric hit Record and I gave it my best.



A few tracks later, we were done and quite satisfied. The song turned out better than we'd hoped, and the guitar sounded deceptively real. Even more surprising: aside from using a guitar amplifier, we didn't have to alter the sound at all—what you hear in the recording is the way it sounded coming out of the DS.

We considered our jam session a smashing success. I don't think I'm ready to hang up my SG, but I also can't fit it into my pocket—Jam Sessions has proven to be an incredible tool for writing songs. More importantly, it's just fun to play around with, whether or not you're a musician. It may not be a game, but in this guitarist/journalist's opinion, it's one of the most innovative DS titles yet. You can try it out for yourself in June.

I SWEAR, GUYS— I'M NOT PLAYING PUZZLE QUEST!

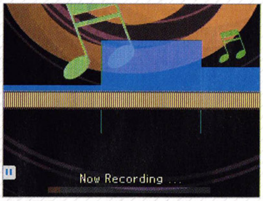
TURN IT UP!

Beyond the Jam

In addition to being a guitar simulator, Jam Sessions offers a number of extra features for the more demanding musician.

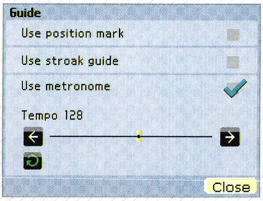
Record Your Riffs

Jam Sessions allows you to record and save up to five jams.


Now Recording ...

Keep the Beat

A metronome option lets you set a rhythm and play along.


Guide

Use position mark ☐

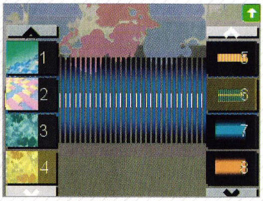
Use stroak guide ☐

Use metronome ✓

Tempo 128

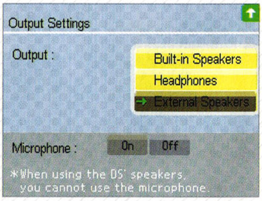
Change Your Look

Jam Sessions offers a ton of background themes to choose from.



Rock the Mic

Turn on the microphone option to add your own voice to the live mix.


Output Settings

Output : Built-in Speakers / Headphones / → External Speakers

Microphone : On Off

*When using the DS' speakers, you cannot use the microphone.

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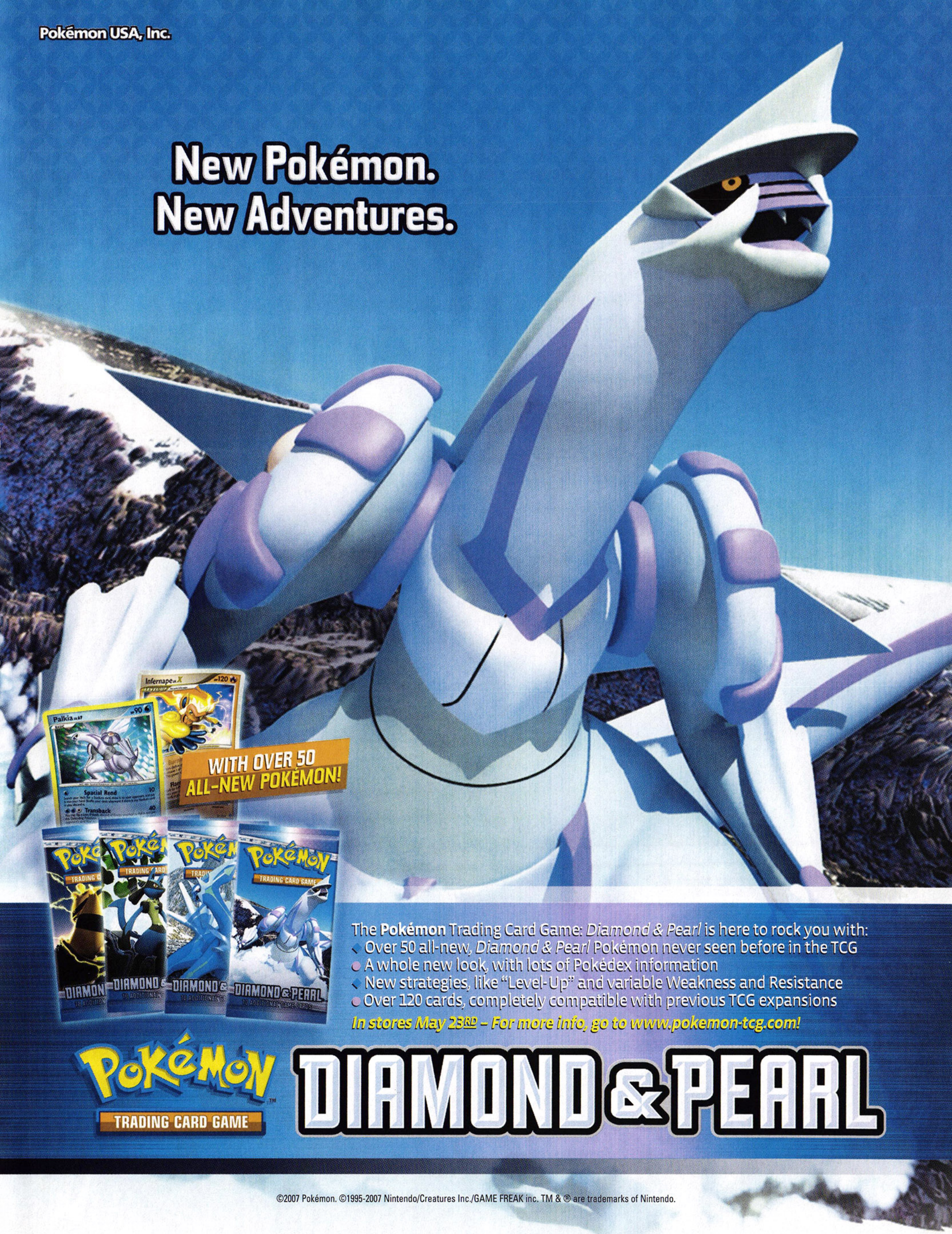
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The Interview

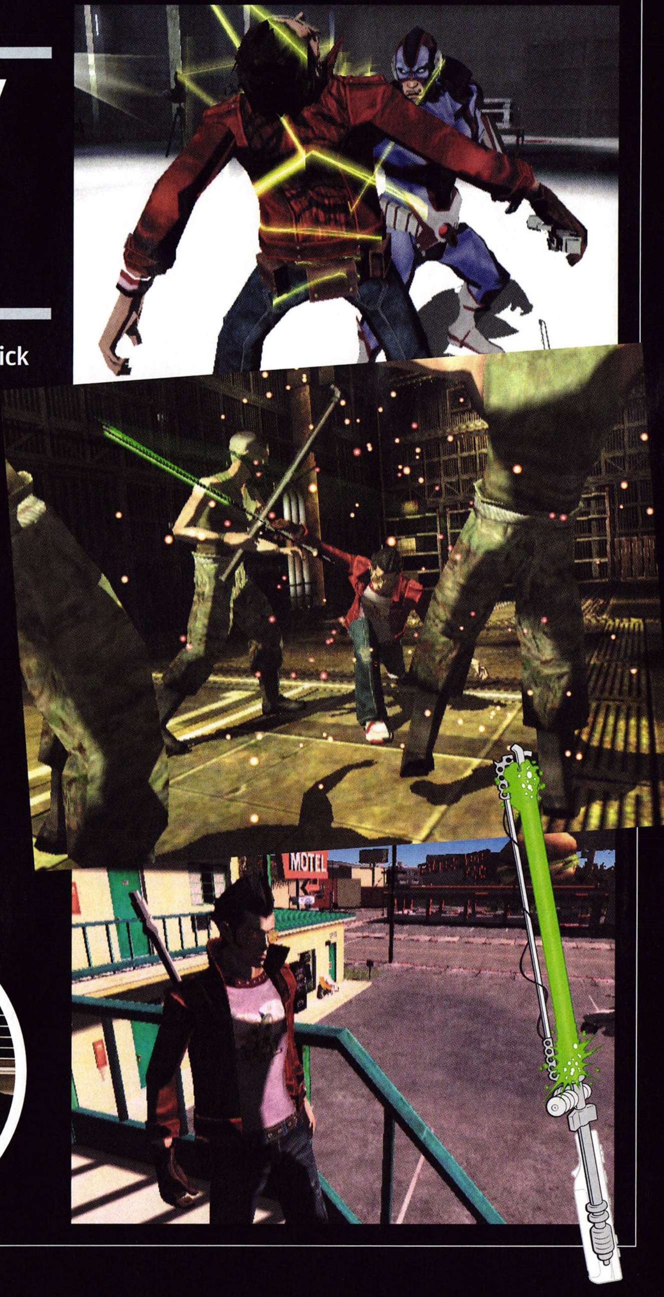
HUNGRY FOR HEROES

No More Heroes's maverick game director, Goichi Suda, blows our minds.

By Chris Shepperd

After putting the gaming world on notice with his bizarre, ultraviolent title Killer7, Goichi Suda (also known as Suda51) is working on his next big thing: No More Heroes for Wii. Set in the town of Santa Destroy, a Beam Katana-wielding professional killer named Travis Touchdown looks to become the best at doing the worst.

In our interview, Goichi Suda discusses his upcoming works, his thoughts about the gaming industry, and the genesis of his strange and amazing design philosophy.



Goichi Suda

President | **Grasshopper Manufacture**
Director | **No More Heroes**

Nintendo Power: What genre of game is No More Heroes? How does it differ from the on-rails shooter style of Killer7?
Goichi Suda: From a genre perspective, No More Heroes will be very different from Killer7. No More Heroes is a more conventional free-roaming action game. It fits into a much more conventional genre. I did this deliberately because it is a backlash against Killer7.

When we made Killer7, we designed it from scratch and used a lot of new ideas. Regarding No More Heroes, we take samples from other games and mix it in to our methods.

NP: How do you mean backlash? Did you feel that Killer7 was poorly received so you needed to do something different? Or do you want to simply do something to make it recognizably different from Killer7?
GS: It's not a backlash against Killer7 in terms of public or critical reaction. I mean that I just want to make a conscious shift in development toward a new direction. In other words, I want to build No More Heroes with a completely different methodology simply because I don't want to do the same thing that I did in Killer7.

NP: Can you explain the game's structure? Is it divided into different missions?
GS: There will be both story missions and side missions. You'll be able to use the in-game map of Santa Destroy to help with the main missions; the sub-missions pop up occasionally as you explore the city.

NP: Will you be able to drive around in vehicles?
GS: The only vehicle Travis will be able to use is his motorcycle.

NP: The first title announced for the game was Heroes. What was behind the name change to No More Heroes? Can you give more insight into the meaning of the title?
GS: The reason I changed the title to No More Heroes is because I wanted the name to sound more universal. I believe that during these times the world is starved for a new hero.

NP: Do you feel like there was a time when there were more hero figures? Who do you consider to be your heroes?
GS: There have always been heroes throughout the ages, but I don't think there are as many true heroes at the present time. I would consider the Smiths [from Killer7] to be my heroes.

NP: The name of the main character is Travis. What is his connection, if any, to Travis from Killer7?
GS: Travis from No More Heroes and Travis from Killer7 are not the same. I do consider the names I give my characters to be very important. I tend to use the same names quite often even though the games I make are different.

I'm thinking about making a game trilogy with a main character named Travis, just like the French movie director Leos Carax made a trilogy of films with a lead character named Alex.

NP: Do you see your own personality coming through in the characters you create?
GS: I think I must surely be reflected in my characters because I draw inspiration from the people I'm involved with and the things I'm interested in.

NP: What is the primary motif for the games' story?
GS: The primary motif for the game is nature. I believe only in that which passes through me, and write a scenario based on that.

NP: What purpose does story play in a game like No More Heroes?
GS: Characters in games are residents of the computer-graphics world, and when the player plays the games, he's controlling the characters as if they were human. If the characters aren't given a life, they're the same as a doll. A game without a story is a game that abandons the attempt to give life to the characters. That's why I believe in the importance of a story.

NP: In what ways does the game take advantage of the Wii remote's functionality?
GS: The basic attack is performed by pushing the A Button. You'll perform a finishing blow by shaking the Wii remote. The Wii remote will also be used to perform professional-wrestling moves.

NP: How do you expect players to react to the Wii control scheme compared to how they would react to a more-traditional game-control scheme?
GS: Since the Wii remote is new hardware, I believe its operation methods are still largely unexplored. However, I do think that this is the most suitable method for playing an action game.

NP: The footage we've seen shows a slot-machine-like spinning-wheel graphic after every enemy defeat. What is the idea behind that?
GS: While I was experimenting with Travis's gameplay method, I adopted the idea of a slot machine. When Travis performs well, the probability of him receiving a reward via the slot machine increases. This idea came about when I was working on [the PlayStation 2 game] Samurai Champloo.

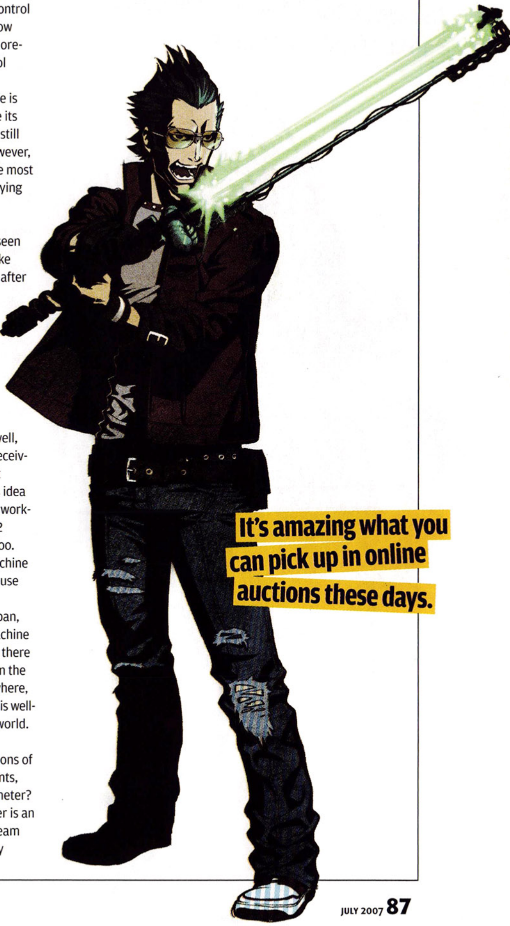
We adopted a slot machine in No More Heroes because Travis is well-versed in Japanese culture—in Japan, the concept of a slot machine is firmly established. As there is also a casino culture in the United States and elsewhere, I consider it an idea that is well-known throughout the world.

NP: What are the functions of the other screen elements, such as the electricity meter?
GS: The electricity meter is an energy gauge for the Beam Katana, Travis's primary weapon. The Beam Katana loses energy after continuous use; when it runs out, the beam isn't usable. So, Travis needs to find ways to generate electricity and inject it into the sword.

> **"No More Heroes will be very different from Killer7."**

NP: How do you describe the art style and character design of No More Heroes?
GS: It's difficult to explain, but it's somewhere between anime and photorealism. I want to present it with the texture of New American Cinema [an avant-garde film period during the 1960s].

NP: Both Killer7 and No More Heroes have extremely violent motifs. What is it about >>



It's amazing what you can pick up in online auctions these days.

over-the-top violence in games that appeals to you?
GS: I like to handle life and death precisely as they are, expressing them without distortion. In No More Heroes, life and death is expressed by signs of 0 and 1. Life and death need to affect the nature of the story.

NP: If you had to describe No More Heroes in one word, what would it be?
GS: It would be parvenu.

NP: What will this game accomplish that no other game before it has accomplished?
GS: No More Heroes accomplishes my goal of originality.

NP: Have your design philosophies changed since you began in the gaming industry? If so, how?
GS: That's a difficult question. I think my design philosophies have changed a lot; in one aspect my views have simply matured, and in another aspect the industry has changed, and in the process has challenged my philosophies.

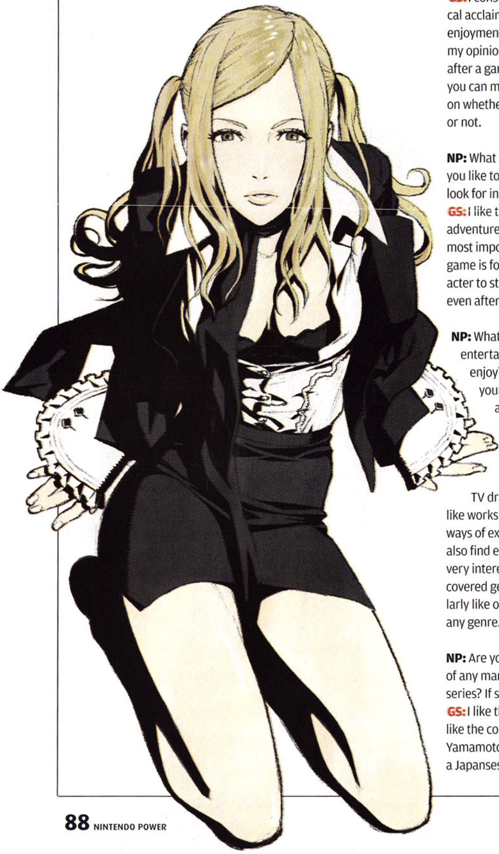
NP: Do you consider it a compliment if someone calls your games unusual or weird? What do those labels mean to you?
GS: I want to consider those comments rightly. Because the current standard of games will change in the future, I think new challenges are a shortcut to arriving at the next standard. I understand that there are both positive and negative opinions about my games.

> “I believe that during these times the world is starved for a new hero.”

NP: What are your criteria for determining if a game has been a success? Sales? Critical acclaim? Player satisfaction?
GS: I consider all of that—critical acclaim, sales, player enjoyment—as my criteria. In my opinion, it takes two years after a game launches before you can make an evaluation on whether it was a success or not.

NP: What kinds of games do you like to play? What do you look for in a game?
GS: I like to play action and adventure games. I think the most important thing in a game is for the game or character to stay with the player even after he's done playing.

The mysterious Sylvia will urge Travis to be as bad as he can be.



NP: What other forms of entertainment do you enjoy? What are some of your favorite movies and books, for example?
GS: I like it all—comics, movies, literature, TV dramas, animation. I like works that emphasize new ways of expressing ideas. I also find existentialist content very interesting. I haven't discovered genres that I particularly like or dislike; I enjoy any genre.

NP: Are you an avid follower of any manga and anime series? If so, what titles?
GS: I like the TV show Lost. I like the comics of Naoki Yamamoto the most, and I like a Japansese manga called *Dorohedoro*. As for anime, I like *Ideon* the most.

NP: You've expressed before that you really enjoyed working with Mr. Mikami on Killer7. What about your relationship worked so well? Do you have any thoughts about Mr. Mikami's recent comments that he wants to return to strictly directing games?
GS: I get along well with Mikami-san. I don't know why, but I feel that I have a relationship of mutual trust with him, as we are both creators. I personally want to play as many games directed by Mikami-san as possible, and I think it's a wonderful thing that gamers from all over the world are able to play games directed by him. I consider “God Hand” to be his best game.

NP: It's been rumored that you're currently working on a few other games for Nintendo systems. Can you tell us any more? For example, the last time we interviewed you, you mentioned a sequel to Contact. We've also heard that you've been working on projects with Mr. Kojima and Mr. Mikami. Can you tell us anything about those?
GS: I will make a new game produced by Mikami-san in the same way that I made Killer7 with him. I'm also working on a radio drama with Kojima-san. That's all I can talk about at the moment. [Editor's note: since the time of the interview, we've learned that the radio drama will be based on the Sega CD cult classic Snatcher.]

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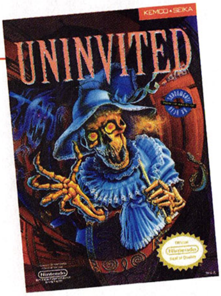
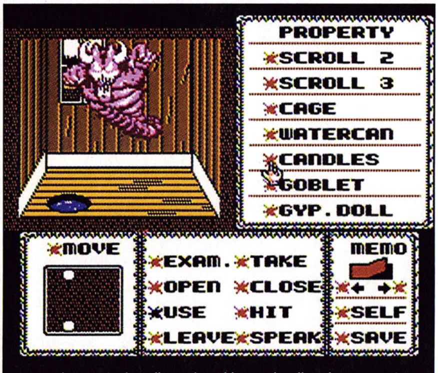
UNINVITED

You may be an unwanted visitor, but everyone's dying for you to stay.



PLATFORM: **NES**
DEVELOPER: **ICOM SIMULATIONS**
PUBLISHER: **KEMCO-SEIKA**
RELEASE DATE: **JUNE 1991**
COVERED IN ISSUES: **20, 23, 29, 36**
WORTHLESS VIALS OF LIQUID: **4**



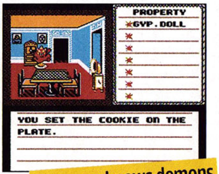
Once you've acquired candles and a goblet, you're all set for a romantic evening with the mansion's freakish denizens.

When you think about games involving haunted mansions, cryptic puzzles, and confrontations with the living dead, the first thing that comes to mind is probably Resident Evil. But long before Capcom coined the term *survival horror*, players were trying to escape with their lives from the frightful confines of Uninvited.

Originally released by Mindscape for the Macintosh in 1986, Uninvited was part of the MacVenture series of point-and-click adventure games (it was released between Deja Vu and Shadowgate). Though the NES version featured numerous minor alterations—the main character was now searching for his sister instead of his younger brother, for example, and all religious symbols were removed—the plot and cerebral gameplay remained intact. As you explored the early 20th-century mansion from a first-person perspective, mysteries and surprises appeared at every turn—a skeletal belle guarded the hallway; a dancing demon would parade through certain rooms; magical scrolls disappeared as they etched their words into your mind. By using the control pad to move the onscreen cursor, you could investigate and interact with just about everything (from a battle axe to fruit to an old phonograph), and the more you learned about the foreboding house and its mystically inclined former inhabitants, the more captivating the game became.

While the plot made Uninvited memorable, what really gave the game its longevity was its seemingly endless supply of puzzles. Locked doors, ghostly visitors, hingeless boxes, and the like could be overcome only by carefully searching the mansion grounds (which included a greenhouse, a chapel, an observatory, and a hedge maze in addition to the mansion proper) and using the clues you recovered to solve each riddle. Many puzzles involved using items, such as spraying Spider Cider on a rail to paralyze a spider, then using the incapacitated critter to ward off an arachnophobic ghost; others involved chanting spells, which came in useful for talking to inanimate objects or scaring off attack dogs with lightning. Though the puzzles were often confounding—especially since you could acquire plenty of objects that had no function—they all adhered to the game's internal logic, and they always made sense once you figured them out.

Unlike its MacVenture brethren, Uninvited has never received a sequel (despite rumors of one in the early '90s), and its only recent incarnation has been on pocket PCs. The game seems ripe for a classic revival—after all, what better place is there for supernatural point-and-click action than the Nintendo DS? —**CHRIS H.**



YOU SET THE COOKIE ON THE PLATE.

Everyone knows demons love a sugar rush.

Don't hate me because I'm beautiful!

WELCOME GUEST

Darin Adler was the lead engineer of the MacVenture series and one of the creators of Uninvited. We recently had the opportunity to chat with Mr. Adler about the point-and-click classic.

NP: What inspired the setting and mythos used in Uninvited?
DA: The idea came from classic horror movies. We wanted a setting with a lot of interesting objects but with few people, since storytelling in our game engine worked best with objects instead of people.

NP: How did Uninvited improve upon Deja Vu?
DA: Technically, we stretched the capabilities of our engine with Uninvited. We added a lot of background elements, like creatures who would walk across the screen at random. I think Uninvited did an even better job of setting the mood than Deja Vu did.

NP: What are you most proud of about the game?
DA: Given the state of the art at the time and the limitations of the adventure game genre, I'm proud of how engrossing a game we were able to make with a point-and-click interface. I am also proud that Uninvited has a few truly scary moments. I nearly jumped out of my chair the first time the female ghost appeared in the hallway. The people doing art and story work didn't mention that one to me!

NP: What did you think of the NES version?
DA: I remember being quite impressed at how Nintendo engineers adapted the artwork to the different-sized screen and to color, and also how well they translated the user interface and storyline to a platform much different than the computer.

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Ready to ride the dolphin? Find out if Mario Party 8 sinks or swims in our review.

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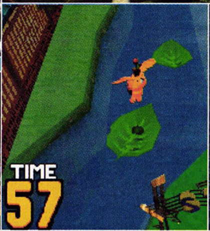
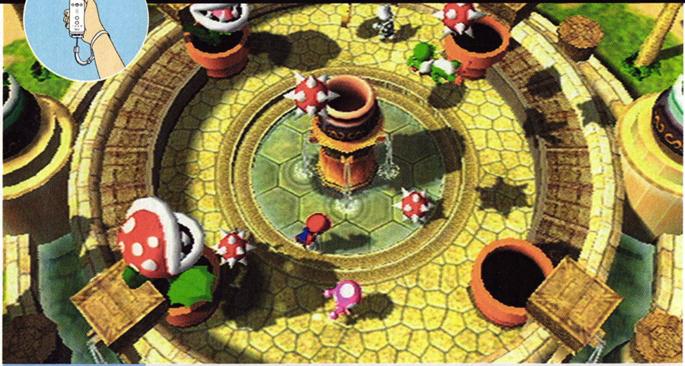
101
Now you can shoot webbing just like Spidey in Spider-Man 3 for Wii.

102
Wrack your brain in Planet Puzzle League for Nintendo DS..



104
Cookie & Cream! Cookie & Cream! I'm a lad who loves Cookie & Cream!



PARTY ON, MARIO

EIGHT IS ENOUGH

MARIO PARTY 8

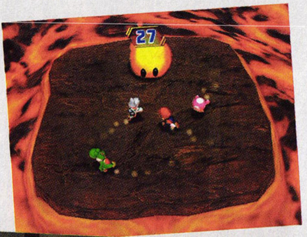
RATING: 7.5

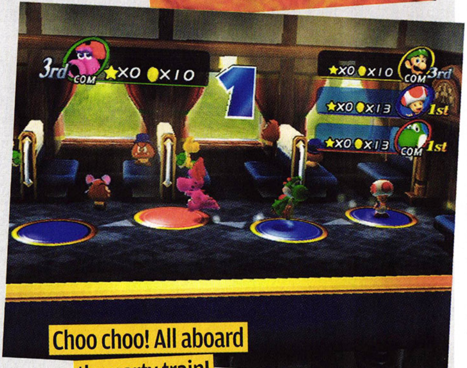
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **HUDSON**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Though the Mario Party series started off on the right foot and set the standard for the party-game genre, it never really took another step. It's true that each game has introduced new minigames, boards, and characters, but none has strayed far from the original formula. Although Mario Party 8 doesn't take the format in a radical new direction either, it does offer something that no previous Mario Party title could: motion control. And for a franchise that's all about partying with your friends, movement makes all the difference.

Motion control permeates almost every aspect of Mario Party 8. You'll smash the Die Block with a flick of the wrist to take your turn on the board, or throw a dart at a spinning wheel to select a prize. But the Wii remote's unique features are best represented in the minigames: row a boat cooperatively with a friend, shake a soda can to see whose will spray the highest, lasso as many barrels as possible; almost every minigame takes a different approach to motion control. Occasionally you'll encounter one that falls flat (these are typically the activities that don't involve motion control), but there are more than enough good minigames to keep the party hoppin.'

The game's biggest weakness is its overall presentation. The front-end interface is confusing, the graphics (though slightly improved from the previous game) leave much to be desired, and the lack of a true widescreen mode is a bummer. But Mario Party has never been about the bells and whistles; it's about the minigames, and bringing friends together for a good time. At that Mario Party 8 succeeds, and takes its place alongside titles like Wii Sports and WarioWare: Smooth Moves. It's not a perfect game, but it is a perfect fit for Wii, and will likely be a series favorite for fans.
—ANDY M.





Choo choo! All aboard the party train!

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE RESIDENT EVIL MOMENT?

With all this talk about old and new Resident Evil games on Wii, we're going into the time machine to pick out our favorite parts of the series.

CHRIS HOFFMAN

Pretty much anything involving Barry Burton and his luxuriant beard. I'm still waiting for a spin-off titled Resident Evil: Barryed Alive.

CHRIS SHEPPERD

Hearing the chainsaw fire up off-screen in RE4 was brilliant. Not being able to see where the sound was coming from made the moment.

ANDY MYERS

Nothing compares to the very first time I played RE1, and that zombie dog crashed through the window. It scared the pants off me. Literally.

GEORGE SINFIELD

The village scene from the beginning of RE4 does the trick for me. Things start quietly, but really start buzzing in a hurry.

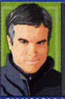
STEVE THOMASON

The first time Nemesis smashed through a wall like some demonic Kool-Aid Man, I nearly soiled my trousers. Staaaaars . . .

SCOTT PELLAND

Like Shepperd, for me it was the chainsaw guy. To this day I hide in a closet when my neighbor's out trimming his maple.

DREW WILLIAMS



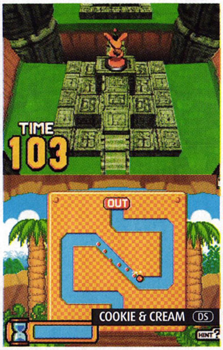
When I mixed a red herb with a green herb in RE1, it sparked a lifelong interest in holistic medicine for the treatment of festering bite wounds.

GIANCARLO VARANINI

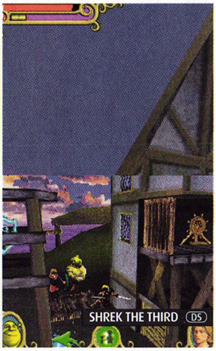
My favorite part was when zombies started attacking the house. Man was it scary. Wait, we're talking about games?

PETE MICHAUD

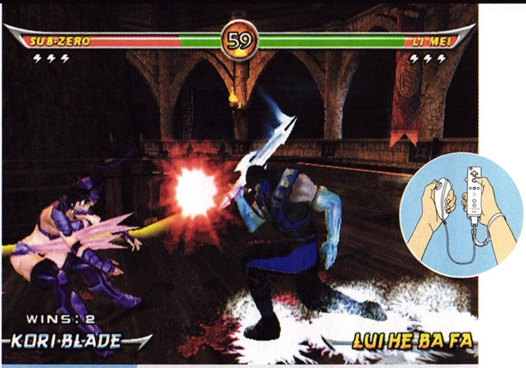
My moment came while revisiting RE1 in the GCN remake. When I saw a zombie reanimate and run at me full speed . . . I think I screamed like a scared little girl.



COOKIE & CREAM (DS)



SHREK THE THIRD (DS)



COOKIE & CREAM

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **AGETEC**
DEVELOPER: **FROM SOFTWARE/HI CORP.**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

It's not very often that an obscure, overlooked gem gets a second chance, but that's exactly what Cookie & Cream represents. The titular rabbit duo first appeared in a wonderful little puzzle-platformer for the PlayStation 2 (entitled The Adventures of Cookie & Cream) that sadly failed to find an audience despite (or perhaps due to) its originality. It seems like a real shame, then, that this DS follow-up falls well short of its potential. The core concept is great: while using the Control Pad to maneuver Cookie through 3-D environments on the top screen, you have to clear obstacles from his path by helping Cream manipulate various doohickeys on the touch screen. To open a gate in front of Cookie, for example, you might use the stylus to line up a series of gears. The puzzles get gradually more complex, and the experience is sort of akin to patting your head and rubbing your belly at the same time. It's a unique and intriguing challenge supported by clever level design. So what's the problem? The puzzles are occasionally very obtuse, and the mechanics can be maddeningly inconsistent across similar scenarios. The controls aren't as tight as they should be, either, which is pretty frustrating when the game is already asking you to perform some serious finger jujitsu. If you crave innovation and have the patience to deal with Cookie & Cream's shortcomings, the title offers a creative, charming, and mostly satisfying adventure. A little more polish could have gone a long way, though. —STEVE T.

SHREK THE THIRD

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
DEVELOPER: **VICARIOUS VISIONS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

If you've never played Lost Vikings, then Shrek the Third may seem like a completely new concept to you. Essentially, you control three different characters (Shrek, Puss in Boots, and Artie) through a series of puzzle-filled environments, strewn across the land of Far Far Away. Each character has his own special talents, as well as flaws. Shrek can blast open doors and clobber most enemies with ease, but his jumping ability is nonexistent. Puss in Boots can jump, but is much weaker than Shrek at attacking enemies. Artie has a projectile weapon useful for triggering distant switches, but is lacking a jump as well. The tricky part is, you can control only one character at a time, which makes for some interesting puzzles and some dicey situations. The upside is that the control works very well on the DS; movement is guided with the Control Pad, and the stylus controls the character's individual talents and switches between characters. The degree of challenge and polish never quite ramps up to where it ought to be, but Shrek the Third is a good time nonetheless. —PETE M.

SCORPION
70
KABAL
HAPKIDO
SUN-BIN

Get over here!

ARMAGEDDON IT

KOMBAT EVOLVED

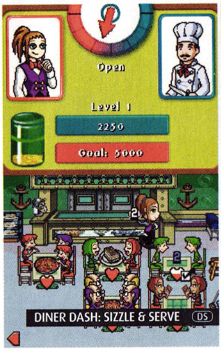
MORTAL KOMBAT: ARMAGEDDON

RATING: 8.0

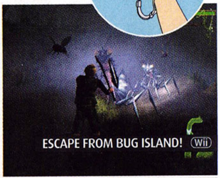
PLATFORM: **WII**
PUBLISHER: **MIDWAY**
DEVELOPER: **JGI/MIDWAY**
ESRB: **MATURE**

Those of us who thought a hardcore fighting game couldn't succeed with a full-on Wii control scheme were wrong. Not only does Mortal Kombat: Armageddon do just that, but it's actually a better game than it was in its previous life (on PS2 and Xbox) because of the new control scheme. The idea is simple: classic MK analog-stick movements such as forward half-circles are mimicked in the air with the Wii remote, while buttons and the nunchuk attachment handle your basic attacks and movement. The system definitely takes some getting used to—especially the fact that punches and kicks are relegated to the control pad—but after spending some quality time with the title, the controls become surprisingly natural and responsive. And Midway has clearly put a lot of effort into balancing the game's overall difficulty to match the new control scheme—so much that when you play with a GameCube controller or the Wii's classic controller, it's a noticeably different game. I'm a big fan of the early MK titles but not a fan of the more-recent iterations, and the motion controls go a long way toward making the experience feel fresh again.

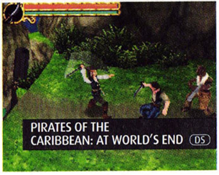
Controls aside, Armageddon suffers from the same issues that have plagued the Mortal Kombat series for many years. Cheap combos are plentiful, flashy moves are added at the expense of character balance, and finishing moves—once a series staple and the payoff for a match well-played—are now so over-the-top gory that they're more of an annoyance than anything else. But Armageddon has such a wide variety of content that it's hard to stay mad at it. Aside from the standard arcade mode (which includes more than 60 playable fighters, plus a robust create-a-character tool), the game includes a wildly different story-adventure mode, plus a fun kart-racing game complete with Wii steering-wheel-style controls. And nothing comes across as an afterthought—there really are three complete games included in the package. When the trio is considered one by one, only the fighting game would score high marks; but still, Armageddon is an incredible value that's loaded with fun. Fans should not be disappointed.
—ANDY M.



DINER DASH: SIZZLE & SERVE (DS)



ESCAPE FROM BUG ISLAND! (Wii)



PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END (DS)

DINER DASH: SIZZLE & SERVE

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Eidos**
DEVELOPER: **PlayFirst**
ESRB: **Everyone**

On the surface, Diner Dash seems a lot like the recently released Cake Mania, another point-and-click food-themed DS game that originated on the PC. Upon closer inspection, however, Diner Dash succeeds where Cake Mania failed; Diner Dash is faster-paced, the controls are more responsive, and continuous changes to the game's look and level layout keep things fairly interesting for the duration. Diner Dash won't win a blue ribbon for deep gameplay—the arcade-style action relies on nothing more than simple touches of the stylus to seat customers, take their orders, and bring them food—but it does serve up a decent casual diversion. Be warned, though: The game becomes rather frustrating during the last few stages. Even if you make no mistakes and keep all your customers happy, you're still likely to fail. —**Chris H.**

ESCAPE FROM BUG ISLAND!

RATING: 3.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **Eidos**
DEVELOPER: **Spike**
ESRB: **Mature**

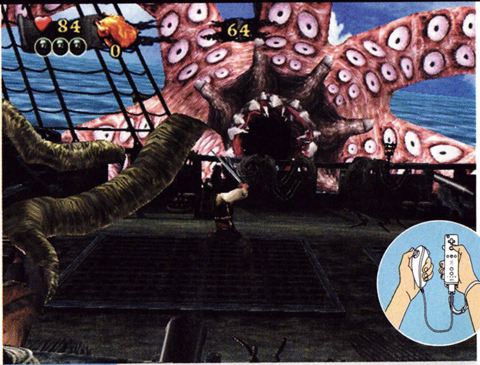
The basic premise of Escape from Bug Island! (formerly known as Necronesia in Japan) is that you swing the Wii remote to hit overgrown bugs with a stick. Sometimes you'll use your stick to hit Amazon lizard women or a giant gorilla's crotch, and you'll eventually upgrade to superior bludgeoning implements like a baseball bat or a machete, but the core experience doesn't change much over the course of the adventure. And as you might imagine, that experience isn't terribly compelling. Stiff controls and sloppy collision detection certainly don't help matters, nor do the truly atrocious production values. Eidos has tried to create a so-bad-its-good vibe with an intentionally cheesy localization, but that's sort of like painting flames on a broken-down 1976 Pinto that's already on fire. Beware! —**Steve T.**

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Disney Interactive**
DEVELOPER: **Amaze**
ESRB: **Everyone 10+**

The DS version of Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End is a lot like the roguish characters of the film it's based on: flawed and rough around the edges, but with enough endearing traits that you can overlook the bad. The game's basic mix of action and adventure works well; the combat is fun and responsive (even if the enemies are brain-dead), and the levels, though fairly linear, offer enough puzzle elements and secrets to keep things interesting. Five different tools (including a grappling hook and a vaulting pole) make the exploration especially fulfilling, although their touch-screen interface should have been simpler and the inability to see some grapple points is irritating. Touch-screen-based boss duels add some decent variety, and plenty of collectibles plus a few bonus levels are nice inclusions for the completist. —**Chris H.**



YO HO, YO HO

THIS PIRATE LIFE ISN'T FOR ME

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END

RATING: 4.5

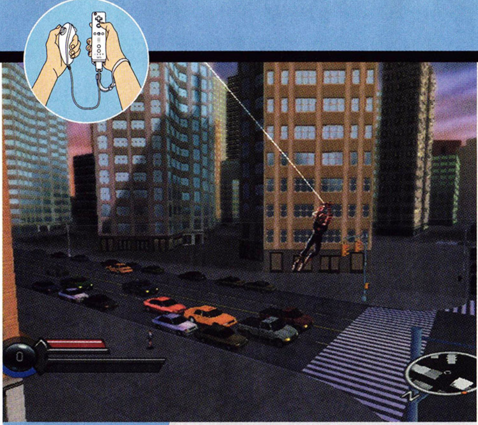
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **Disney Interactive**
DEVELOPER: **Eurocom**
ESRB: **Teen**

If we forget for a moment that this is a video game based on a big-name movie, we're left with a pirate game with tons of swashbuckling, high-seas adventure, and all sorts of weird creatures and environments. It has all the ingredients for the perfect videogame, and along with its sword-like controller, the makings for an excellent Wii game. But what should be At World's End's greatest asset—the combat and the use of the Wii remote—quickly turns into its greatest failing, resulting in an overall experience mired in tedium.

The first problem is that there's no real strategy to the combat—or at least there's no action that gives you an advantage over your enemies. You're either maddeningly flailing the Wii remote side to side (for weak attacks) or up and down (for stronger attacks) for what seems like several minutes at a time. This doesn't provide much entertainment, and (it's embarrassing to admit this) it gets very tiring in the physical sense. Rest comes only from blocking or parrying enemy attacks, but your blocking power is limited (it decreases with each block but regenerates over time) and parrying is held back by the imprecise controls—it usually takes three or four tries to parry.

Not that it matters. Most of the experience in At World's End involves circa-1988 game design that involves fighting one group of enemies to move on to a new section where you find more waves of enemies. The action is broken up somewhat by small side quests that have you tearing down Wanted posters or tricking bystanders out of money to raise your pirate rating—one of the few truly entertaining moments in the game. There are also Jackanisms, DDR-like activities that fall a little flat because of the odd and often poor animation.

There are some glimpses of light in an otherwise gloomy experience. The visuals, particularly the lighting, in small parts of the game look quite nice and there is an enormous amount of extra content in the form of unlockable characters and minigames (such as liar's dice and poker). But, as you might imagine, none of these things are really worth going to the ends of the earth for. —**Giancarlo V.**



GRAB THE BUG SPRAY

A TANGLED WEB

SPIDER-MAN 3

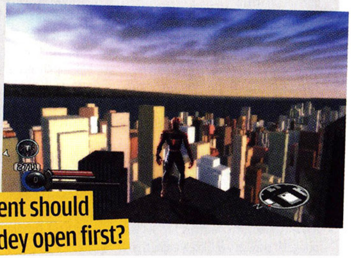
RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: Wii
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: VICARIOUS VISIONS
ESRB: TEEN

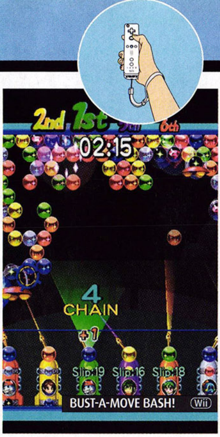
Spider-Man 3 for Wii gets at least one critically important gameplay mechanic right: swinging through the steel-and-concrete canyons of Manhattan is a blast. Because the controls for the left and right web-shooters are mapped, respectively, to the nunchuk and the remote, Spidey's urban Tarzan act has never been as intuitive or fun as it is in this game. After some trial and error during the opening tutorial sequence, you'll swing with ease from one fight sequence to another. Unfortunately, getting there isn't half the fun—it's nearly *all* of the fun.

Most of the fights—from boss battles against Marvel Universe and Spider-Man-movie characters to the repetitive street scuffles with nondescript gang members—tend to be perfunctory and bland. Even the black symbiont suit that Spidey dons in the movie is little more than a readily accessible power-up in the game. Despite the wide assortment of moves at your command, there's scant joy in all the Wii-remote waggling and button mashing—it's just a way to advance the story. Sad to say, there's not much to the story you're advancing. Activision's adherence to sandbox-style game design in the series is a double-edged sword—the open world facilitates all of that wonderful web-swinging, but it also leaves our hero directionless amid the many loose plot threads that litter the game like spent webbing. The abrupt and, at times, laughably ugly cinema sequences only add to the confusion—they seem to be there mainly to remind you that the game is related to a movie.

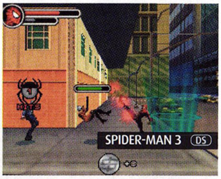
Any design issues one might have with Spider-Man 3 take a back seat to the game's technical problems, however. Its blocky character models, chronic frame-rate issues, and N64-quality cityscape left my Spidey sense tingling—this game wasn't quite ready to scale the Empire State Building. —DREW W.



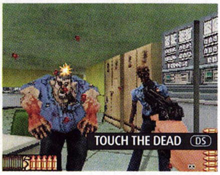
Which present should Spidey open first?



BUST-A-MOVE BASH! (Wii)



SPIDER-MAN 3 (DS)



TOUCH THE DEAD (DS)

BUST-A-MOVE BASH!

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: Wii
PUBLISHER: MAJESCO
DEVELOPER: TAITO
ESRB: EVERYONE

If you've played one Bust-A-Move game, you've pretty much played them all. Even with Wii's motion-based controls, the venerable puzzle series sticks to its color-matching, bubble-busting roots. Not that there's anything wrong with that—the addictive, simple-to-play formula has served Bust-A-Move well since the 16-bit era. If anything, Bash! is more accessible and easier to play than ever thanks to its point-and-shoot interface, which strikes a perfect balance between responsiveness and sensitivity. The new controls, however, have the unfortunate side effect of making the game one of the easiest in the series, and the low challenge level is compounded by infinite continues, but the game's 250-plus puzzles and insane eight-player mode will keep you busting for a long time nonetheless. Bash! is a solid entry in the series for Bust-A-Move newcomers or fans who just can't get enough. —CHRIS H.

SPIDER-MAN 3

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: VICARIOUS VISIONS
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

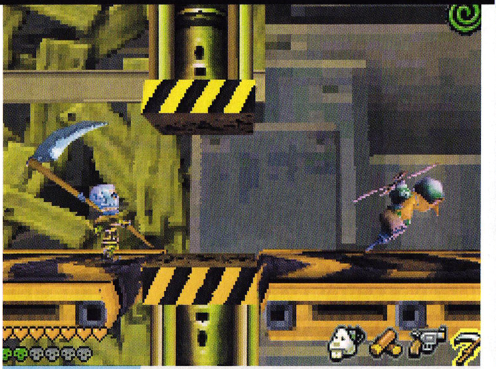
After a couple of mediocre attempts to capture Spidey's movie magic on the DS, it seems that Vicarious Visions has finally gotten it right. Spider-Man 3 stays with the 2.5-D style of the first two movie games—despite 3-D polygonal backgrounds, it's essentially a side-scroller. You maneuver the webslinger around New York City with the Control Pad, including swinging between skyscrapers. All of the combat moves are done via touch-screen gestures, and they're deceptively simple—swipe toward an enemy for a basic attack and double-tap in the foe's direction to wrap it up. You learn more-advanced techniques as you progress through the game, but they're all easy to pull off with aplomb. Spider-Man 3 features a free-roaming world, allowing you to practice your moves against random baddies before jumping into the next mission. A little variety in Spidey's objectives would've been nice, though, as fighting waves of enemies gets tiresome. —CHRIS S.

TOUCH THE DEAD

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: EIDOS
DEVELOPER: DREAM ON STUDIO
ESRB: MATURE

The DS seems like a natural platform for light-gun-style games, but here's the rub: it's a lot easier to tap a stylus on a screen that it is to aim a light gun. Eidos's undead-extermination rail shooter gets around the problem by emphasizing tedious ammo management over shooting. It also moves along at a pretty good clip (no pun intended) thanks, perhaps, to the crudeness of its 3-D graphics. For all the frantic zombie-blasting and murky environments, however, the game fails to generate much suspense or horror. If you can't muster that sense of dread that permeates the Resident Evil or House of the Dead titles, then you may as well make a game about shooting colorful balloons at a backyard picnic. —DREW W



FEAR THE REAPER

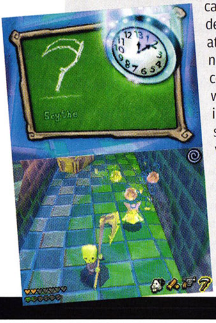
JUNIOR VARSITY

DEATH JR. AND THE SCIENCE FAIR OF DOOM

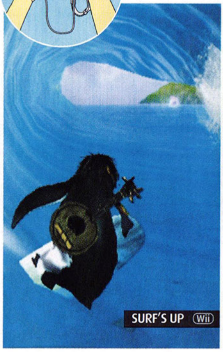
RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
DEVELOPER: **BACKBONE**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

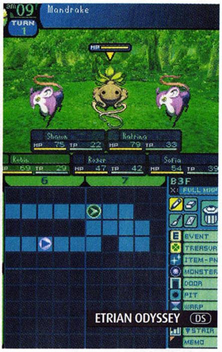
Based on a series known mostly for its wicked art style, Death, Jr. and the Science Fair of Doom for DS excels in the visual department. The wild cast of characters—from the son of the grim reaper to Smith and Weston, a pair of brainy twins conjoined at the head—is easily the game's standout feature. And the graphics aren't bad, either. The game is essentially a fully polygonal action-platformer that switches seamlessly between a side-scrolling view and a 3-D view. But good looks aren't everything—Death, Jr. is also riddled with problems. The level design can go from decent to atrocious in no time. The combat, which involves swinging your scythe, shooting guns, and throwing explosive gerbils, feels unresponsive. (The game does include a surprisingly cool control option that allows you to fight with the stylus, but it does not offer a left-handed mode to go along with it. Unfortunately, this reviewer happens to be left-handed.) The puzzles are also problematic. Almost every one involves switching from Death, Jr. to the game's other playable character, Pandora, to collect colored orbs and fire them at matching-colored targets. This system quickly becomes tedious, as you'll often find yourself backtracking long distances to locate the colors you need. The game's boss battles offer a nice change of pace in an otherwise stale experience, but there are only four, including the final boss.



What plagues Death, Jr. most severely is its overall lack of polish—it just doesn't feel like a finished product. In addition to problems with the camera (which moves automatically), there's a bizarre lag in control when you switch from DJ to Pandora. Sometimes the lag is tolerable, but other times (when you're solving a puzzle while standing on a conveyor belt that's moving you toward a giant circular saw, for instance), it's beyond troublesome. Diehard fans of the series may find value in DJ's first DS outing—the story is fun, and almost every character makes an appearance. For everyone else, though, Death, Jr. is mediocre at best. —**ANDY M.**



SURF'S UP (Wii)



ETRIAN ODYSSEY (DS)

SURF'S UP

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: **WII**
PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **UBISOFT**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

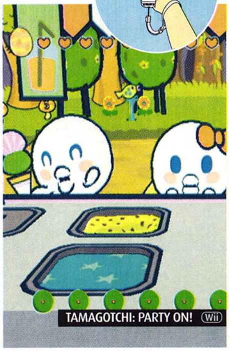
The recent spate of movies starring penguins is showing no signs of ebbing, and with them comes a wave of licensed games. The next in line is Surf's Up, starring a bunch of waterfowl vying for surfing glory. In the Wii title, you ride the crest of a seemingly endless wave, performing tricks off the lip and dodging obstacles along the coast. Surfing games are rare, so Surf's Up is kind of enthralling when you first ride the waves, and the graphics are better than you expect from a licensed game of its ilk. But the charm wears off fast—the moves are underwhelming and the stages are too similar. The most disappointing aspect, however, is the lack of Wii-remote usage—instead of carving up the tide with remote gyrations, you can boost occasionally by shaking the controller. —**CHRIS S.**

ETRIAN ODYSSEY

RATING: 7.0

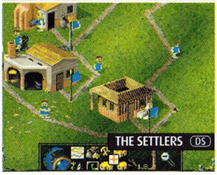
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **ATLUS**
DEVELOPER: **ATLUS**
ESRB: **TEEN**

While some publishers have been casting wide nets over the DS adventure-gaming audience by incorporating action elements into RPG titles such as Dragon Quest Heroes: Rocket Slime (Square Enix) and Children of Mana (Nintendo), Atlus has been sticking to its hard-core roots with the likes of Deep Labyrinth and Izuna: Legend of the Unemployed Ninja. It may not be a move that attracts newbies, but diehard dungeon crawlers will likely enjoy the cerebral challenges that the company's latest no-holds-barred role-player brings. Etrian Odyssey has a contemporary graphic style and makes liberal use of the handheld's touch screen, but the core gameplay is rooted in '80s-style RPG tradition. During your exploration of the game's enormous Yggdrasil Labyrinth (by way of a first-person perspective that pivots with 90-degree turns), you are tasked with drawing your own map (using touch-screen mapping tools), selecting level-up options for your five party members from dozens of choices, and keeping everyone in your group alive until you can record progress at the game's only save point (which is in town). The features are designed to give you freedom and keep you absorbed in the game, but even the most hands-on player will find it tedious to collect items in the labyrinth only to sell them—one small fang and bug wing at a time—to finance the purchase of useful goods (because defeated monsters don't yield cash). Also, character development is so complex (a magic user increases the strength of a spell and additional qualities of that spell in two different categories, for example), that the net effects of one leveling-up choice over another are difficult to comprehend at first. Several hours in (once you get a sense for character-building cause and effect), you might feel like starting over to ensure that your characters have a fighting chance against the labyrinth's monsters. Storyline is another place where the game bucks current trends. You're not sent to save the world or even a single princess; you just take on single quests mercenary-style and go as far into the labyrinth as you can. Freedom reigns in Etrian Odyssey. The question is, how much freedom is too much? —**GEORGE S.**

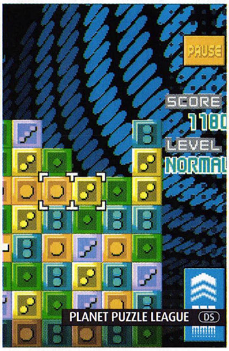


TAMAGOTCHI: PARTY ON! (Wii)

DRAGON BALL Z: HARUKANARU DENSETSU (DS)



THE SETTLERS (DS)



PLANET PUZZLE LEAGUE (DS)

042
Bam!
1P
009
Naruto
Uzumaki Barrage
Secret Technique

NARUTO: NINJA COUNCIL 3 (DS)

TAMAGOTCHI: PARTY ON!

RATING: 2.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **Namco Bandai**
DEVELOPER: **H.A.N.D.**
ESRB: **Everyone**

Not since Tammany Hall has a political system been so rife with corruption as the one portrayed in Tamagotchi: Party On! This Mario Party clone encourages players to steal money from opposing campaigns, award lucrative contracts to cronies, and visit as many hot springs as possible on their run for the presidency of Tamagotchi Planet. Bizarre amalgamation of adorable virtual pets and cutthroat campaign politics aside, Party On! is about as mundane as they come. All of the minigames are solitary affairs (you compete with other players only via the overarching board game), and involve such scintillating activities as watering plants and setting clocks. The game moves painfully slow as a result, with the vast majority of your time spent watching opponents take their turns. Worst of all, an overabundance of random elements ensures that the campaign's final outcome is determined almost entirely by luck. —**Steve T.**

DRAGON BALL Z: HARUKANARU DENSETSU

RATING: 4.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Atari**
DEVELOPER: **BEC**
ESRB: **Everyone**

The Dragon Ball mythos bears much of the burden in Harukanaru Densetsu. If this game didn't follow the early-days Dragon Ball storyline, the dreadful simplicity of the card-battle gameplay mechanics (you could probably complete several battles with your eyes closed) would likely be even less tolerable. At times the card mechanics kick into gear, forcing you to think (albeit briefly) about how you want to approach the battle. But this usually happens only when you're dealt a terrible hand, and there's almost always one card available to bail you out, whether it's a reshuffle card or a powerful attack card. In any case, battles—particularly the random ones that occur while you're venturing across the map—are often a chore for those who want to get to the good stuff, such as the appearance of a favorite character or the re-enactment of some choice moments from DBZ history. —**Giancarlo V.**

THE SETTLERS

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Ubisoft**
DEVELOPER: **Blue Byte**
ESRB: **Everyone**

Usually when a franchise makes the jump from PC or console to a handheld system, the developers must pare down some of the features to make it work. This isn't the case with The Settlers—Ubisoft has managed to cram every feature of the PC real-time strategy game into the DS version. Now we know why this doesn't happen very often—due to the reduced screen space and gobs of information the game delivers to the player, navigation around the world and through the many menus can be hopelessly confusing. At its heart, The Settlers isn't a bad game; its unique take on empire-building and resource management is loads of fun. Unfortunately, the ambitious attempt to bring the full-fledged experience to the DS results in something of a mess. —**Chris S.**

PLANET PUZZLE LEAGUE

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Nintendo**
DEVELOPER: **Intelligent Systems**
ESRB: **Everyone**

While astronomers continue searching for life-bearing worlds beyond our solar system, we've found Planet Puzzle League for DS much closer to home, and it definitely shows signs of intelligent life. Based on the classic Panel de Pon action-puzzler for the Super Famicom (appearing in North America first as Tetris Attack and later as Pokémon Puzzle League), Intelligent Systems' latest version is a perfect match for the DS. The game's goal is simple—line up three or more blocks that bear the same symbol to clear them from the screen. You'll earn higher scores by creating combos of more than three blocks or chains of blocks that drop into place to clear additional blocks. Holding the DS like a book and pushing blocks with the stylus makes for an intuitive and fast-paced experience. I found that holding the DS in the standard (non-book) position and using the Control Pad and buttons was ideal for the more contemplative pace of the Puzzle mode, however.

Speaking of options, PPL is stuffed with single- and multiplayer modes, including options to play via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. Time Attack, Puzzle, Endless, Clear, Garbage Challenge, and Vs. the Computer are all single-player modes, and you'll find a number of gameplay variations for each of them. Nintendo WFC options include Birthday Battle (taking on others who share your birthday), Free Play Battle, Novice Battle, and Friend Battle. You can also play multiplayer via LAN or send a demo game to another DS user. Some additional options include a tutorial, a Daily Play challenge, and selectable background and block designs. Unfortunately, this last option isn't available for every mode, and in some instances the given designs make it hard to identify blocks. The music, likewise, is a mixed bag; sometimes inspiring and matching the background theme and other times as generic as a TV game-show theme. Overall, however, Planet Puzzle League lives up to the rich tradition of its heritage, and puzzle fans would be remiss to ignore it. —**Scott P.**

NARUTO: NINJA COUNCIL 3

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Tomy**
DEVELOPER: **Aspect**
ESRB: **Everyone 10+**

Now that Naruto has achieved a level of success in the US on par with Dragon Ball Z, fans are scooping up anything featuring blond ninjas in orange pajamas. Unlike the surprisingly accessible Clash of Ninja fighting games, the portable Ninja Council games are decidedly otaku-only affairs. The new DS title (previous outings were on GBA) looks good, sounds great, and will bore the jutsu out of nonfans. There are several dozen platforming/fighting missions in the game, but they are all rather brief and uninspired; they seem designed to give each of the 27 playable characters a workout, and fans the opportunity to try out a wide range of special ninja moves. Narutoholics are better off sticking with the multiplayer Battle Royale if they want to toss the ol' shuriken around. —**Drew W.**

[ARCHIVE]

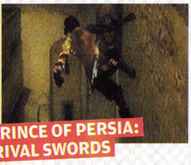
POKéMANIA

You've probably already experienced the latest craze in the Pokémon world—Pokémon Diamond and Pokémon Pearl. We scored both versions a 9.0 because of all the new features they bring to the series, such as Wi-Fi compatibility. This month the Wii hits keep on coming with Super Paper Mario (9.5), a grand adventure that takes the Mario franchise into a whole different dimension.

SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS.
• INDICATES WI-FI COMPATIBLE

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Wii				
The Ant Bully	N/A	Midway	211	E10+
Avatar: The Last Airbender	N/A	THQ	211	E10+
The Barnyard	N/A	THQ	211	E10+
Bionicle Heroes	5.0	Eidos	216	E10+
Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII	7.0	Ubisoft	215	T
Call of Duty 3	6.5	Activision	211	T
Cars	N/A	THQ	211	E
Chicken Little: Ace in Action	7.0	Buena Vista	212	E10+
Cooking Mama: Cook Off	7.5	Majesco	216	E
Cosmic Family	N/A	Ubisoft	215	E
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi 2	7.0	Atari	211	T
Elebits	7.5	Konami	212	E
Excite Truck	8.5	Nintendo	211	E
Far Cry: Vengeance	4.0	Ubisoft	212	M
The Godfather: Blackhand Edition	8.0	Electronic Arts	217	M
The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy	N/A	Midway	211	E10+
GT Pro Series	5.0	Ubisoft	211	E
Happy Feet	4.5	Midway	211	E
Heatseeker	7.5	Codemasters	215	T
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	N/A	Sierra	212	E10+
Kororinpa: Marble Mania	7.0	Hudson Soft/Konami	215	E
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	9.5	Nintendo	211	T
Madden NFL 07	8.5	Electronic Arts	211	E
Marvel: Ultimate Alliance	8.0	Activision	211	T
Medal of Honor: Vanguard	6.0	Electronic Arts	217	T
Meet the Robinsons	6.5	Buena Vista	215	E10+
Metal Slug Anthology	8.0	SNK Playmore USA	211	T
Monster 4x4: World Circuit	6.5	Ubisoft	211	E
Need for Speed: Carbon	6.0	Electronic Arts	212	E10+
Open Season	N/A	Ubisoft	211	E10+
Prince of Persia: Rival Swords	7.0	Ubisoft	215	T
Rampage: Total Destruction	6.5	Midway	211	E10+
Rapala Tournament Fishing	N/A	Activision	212	E
Rayman Raving Rabbids	7.5	Ubisoft	211	E
Red Steel	8.0	Ubisoft	211	T
Sonic and the Secret Rings	8.5	Sega	214	E
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	7.0	THQ	211	E
SSX Blur	8.5	Electronic Arts	215	E
Super Paper Mario	9.5	Nintendo	216	E
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Blitz	8.5	Sega	211	E
Super Swing Golf	7.5	Tecmo	212	E
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	8.5	Electronic Arts	215	E
TMNT	5.0	Konami	215	E10+
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent	6.0	Ubisoft	211	M
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	7.5	Activision	212	E10+
Trauma Center: Second Opinion	8.5	Atlus	211	T
WarioWare: Smooth Moves	9.0	Nintendo	212	E
Wii Play	7.0	Nintendo	213	E
Wii Sports	8.0, 8.5	Nintendo	211	E
Wing Island	5.5	Hudson Soft/Konami	215	E
World Series of Poker: Tournament of Champions	N/A	Activision	212	T

REVIEWER NOTES



PRINCE OF PERSIA: RIVAL SWORDS

I'm not happy that Ubisoft put so little effort into this Wii port of The Two Thrones (nor that they dumbed it down to get a T rating), but it's still a fantastic adventure. The combat and platforming are integrated brilliantly to create one of the smoothest, most satisfying gameplay experiences around. Give it a look if you missed out on the GCN version. —Steve T.

>THE GODFATHER: BLACKHAND EDITION (Wii)

Despite decent buzz and George's positive review, I remained pretty skeptical about The Godfather: Blackhand Edition. It just seemed blasphemous to make a sandbox-style game from one of the most revered movies of all time. Fortunately, I was wrong—the story and motifs remain faithful to the film, and the voice acting is solid (although the open-ended game structure was a little too loose at times). That'll teach me to disagree with the family.

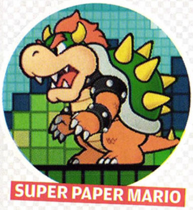
—Chris S.

FINAL FANTASY VI ADVANCE

FINAL FANTASY VI Advance was the best-selling GBA game this past February for good reason—it's one of the best RPGs ever made, period. The SNES original was the title that convinced me of the appeal of the role-playing genre, and the game still holds up remarkably well; thanks to its new features, it's arguably better than ever. Only the fact that the game's a port prevented it from scoring a perfect 10. —Chris H.

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
NINTENDO GAMECUBE				
The Ant Bully	5.0	Midway	208	E10+
Avatar: The Last Airbender	7.0	THQ	210	E
The Barnyard	6.0	THQ	207	E10+
Baten Kaitos Origins	8.0	Nintendo	209	T
Bionicle Heroes	5.0	Eidos	211	E10+
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	N/A	THQ	210	E
Cars	6.5	THQ	206	E
FIFA 07	8.0	Electronic Arts	210	E
Flushed Away	6.5	D3PA	210	E
The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy	6.5	Midway	210	E10+
Happy Feet	N/A	Midway	211	E
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	5.5	Sierra	209	E10+
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	9.5	Nintendo	212	T
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	7.5	LucasArts	209	E10+
Madden NFL 07	9.0	Electronic Arts	208	E
Major League Baseball 2K6	7.0, 6.5,6.0	2K Sports	205	E
Meet the Robinsons	N/A	Buena Vista	215	E10+
Monster House	6.5	THQ	207	E10+
Naruto: Clash of Ninja 2	7.5	Tomy/D3PA	210	T
Need For Speed: Carbon	7.5	Electronic Arts	211	E10+
Nicktoons: Battle for Volcano Island	N/A	THQ	210	E
One Piece: Grand Adventure	5.5	Namco Bandai	208	T
One Piece: Pirates' Carnival	5.5	Namco Bandai	209	E
Open Season	8.0	Ubisoft	209	E10+
Over the Hedge	6.0	Activision	205	E10+
Pac-Man World Rally	5.5	Namco Bandai	208	E
Radio Allergy	5.0	O~3	215	E
Shrek Smash N' Crash Racing	N/A	Activision	213	E10+
The Sims 2 Pets	6.5	Electronic Arts	211	E
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	8.5	THQ	210	E
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	5.5	Sega	208	E
Teen Titans	6.0	Majesco	204	E10+
TMNT	N/A	Konami	214	E10+
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent	4.5	Ubisoft	210	M
Tomb Raider: Legend	7.5	Eidos	211	T
X-Men: The Official Game	6.5	Activision	205	T
NINTENDO DS				
Alex Rider: Stormbreaker	4.5	THQ	208	T
Arthur and the Invisibles	N/A	Atari	213	E
Avatar: The Last Airbender	6.5	THQ	210	E
Bionicle Heroes	N/A	Eidos	211	T
• Bomberman Land Touch!	7.0	Atlus	211	E
Brain Boost: Beta Wave	N/A	Majesco	212	E
Brain Boost: Gamma Wave	N/A	Majesco	212	E
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	N/A	THQ	210	E
Break 'Em All	7.0	D3PA	206	E
Bubble Bobble Revolution	6.0	Codemasters	208	E
Cake Mania	5.5	Majesco	216	E
Cars	5.5	THQ	206	E
Cartoon Network Racing	N/A	The Game Factory	213	E
• Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin	9.0	Konami	211	T
Catz	N/A	Ubisoft	211	E
Charlotte's Web	6.0	Sega	211	E
Chicken Little: Ace in Action	6.5	Buena Vista	210	E
Children of Mana	6.5	Nintendo	210	E10+
• Clubhouse Games	7.0	Nintendo	209	E
• Contact	6.5	Atlus	209	E10+
Cooking Mama	7.0	Majesco	209	E
Crash Boom Bang!	4.0	Sierra	209	E
Custom Robo Arena	7.5	Nintendo	215	E10+
Deep Labyrinth	6.0	Atlus	208	E10+
• Diddy Kong Racing DS	7.5	Nintendo	213	E
• Digimon World DS	N/A	Namco Bandai	212	E
Dino Master	5.5	Majesco	205	E
Disney's American Dragon: Jake Long—Attack of the Dark Dragon	N/A	Buena Vista	208	E
Dogz	N/A	Ubisoft	211	E
Dragon quest Heroes: Rocket Slime	9.0	Square Enix	208	E
Elite Beat Agents	9.5	Nintendo	210	E10+
Eragon	N/A	Vivendi	211	T
F-24 Stealth Fighter	3.5	Majesco	215	E10+
FIFA 07	N/A	Electronic Arts	210	E
• Final Fantasy III	8.0	Square Enix	211	E10+
• Final Fantasy Fables: Chocobo Tales	7.0	Square Enix	216	E
Flushed Away	N/A	D3PA	210	E
Fossil League D.T.C.	N/A	D3PA	214	E
Freedom Wings	6.0	Natsume	207	E10+

Title	Score	Publisher	Vol.	ESRB
Full Metal Alchemist: Dual Sympathy	7.0	Destineer	212	T
Gunpey DS	6.5	Namco BAndai	210	E
Harlem Globetrotters World Tour	N/A	DSI	211	E
Harvest Moon DS	6.0	Natsume	208	E
Hi Hi Puffy Amiyumi: The Genie and the Amp	4.5	D3PA	206	E10+
Hotel Dusk: Room 215	8.0	Nintendo	213	T
Inuyasha: Secret of The Divine Jewel	6.0	Namco Bandai	213	E10+
Izuna: Legend of the Unemployed Ninja	6.5	Atlus	213	E10+
Justice League Heroes	3.0	Warner Bros.Interactive	210	E10+
Kim Possible: Global Gemini	N/A	Buena Vista	214	E10+
Kirby: Squeak Squad	7.5	Nintendo	212	E
• Konductra	N/A	0~3	208	E
Konami Classics Series: Arcade Hits	7.5	Konami	214	E10+
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	N/A	Sierra	209	E
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	4.5	LucasArts	209	E
Lost in Blue 2	5.0	Konami	215	E10+
Lunar Knights	8.0	Konami	213	E10+
Madden NFL 07	7.5	Electronic Arts	208	E
Mage Knight: Destiny's Soldier	N/A	Namco Bandai	210	E10+
Magical Starsign	7.0	Nintendo	210	E
Magnetica	8.0	Nintendo	205	E
Mario Hoops 3-on-3	7.5	Nintendo	209	E
• Mario Vs. Donkey Kong 2: March of the Minis	7.5	Nintendo	209	E
Marvel Trading Card Game	4.0	Konami	213	T
MechAssault: Phantom War	8.0	Majesco	209	T
Meet the Robinsons	N/A	Buena Vista	215	E10+
Mega Man ZX	8.5	Capcom	208	E
Meteos: Disney Magic	7.5	Buena Vista Games	214	E
Micro Machines V4	N/A	Codemasters	211	E
Monster Bomber	N/A	Majesco	212	E
Monster House	5.5	THQ	207	E
My Frogger: Toy Trials	N/A	Konami	211	E
Nacho Libre	7.0	Majesco	210	E10+
Need For Speed: Carbon	N/A	Electronic Arts	211	E
New Super Mario Bros.	9.5,9.5,9.5,9.5	Nintendo	205	E
Nicktoons: Battle for Volcano Island	N/A	THQ	210	E
• Open Season	N/A	Ubisoft	209	E
Over the Hedge	6.0	Activision	205	E
Over the Hedge: Hammy Goes Nuts	N/A	Activision	210	E
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Justice for All	9.0	Capcom	212	T
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	6.0	Buena Vista	206	T
• Pogo Island	7.0	Electronic Arts	215	E
Point Blank DS	6.0	Namco Bandai	206	E10+
• Pokémon Diamond/Pearl	9.0	Nintendo	216	E
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Blue Rescue Team	8.0	Nintendo	209	E
Pokémon Ranger	7.0	Nintendo	210	E
Puzzle Quest: Challenge of the Warlords	4.0	D3PA	215	E10+
Quickspot	5.5	Namco Bandai	214	E10+
Rafa Nadal Tennis	N/A	Codemasters	213	E
Rainbow Islands Revolution	4.5	Codemasters	208	E
Rayman Raving Rabbids	7.0	Ubisoft	214	E
Scooby-Doo! Who's Watching Who?	6.5	THQ	210	E
The Sims 2 Pets	5.5	Electronic Arts	211	E
SNK Vs. Capcom Card Fighters DS	7.0	SNK Playmore	215	T
Spectrobes	8.0	Buena Vista Games	214	E
Spider-Man: Battle for New York	6.0	Activision	212	E10+
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	N/A	THQ	210	E
Star Fox Command	9.5	Nintendo	208	E10+
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	5.5	Bethesda	210	E
Star Wars: Lethal Alliance	7.0	Ubisoft	212	E10+
Steel Horizon	4.5	Konami	214	E10+
The Suite Life of Zack & Cody	N/A	Buena Vista	208	E
Tamagotchi Connection: Cornershop 2	N/A	Namco Bandai	211	E
• Tenchu: Dark Secret	5.0	Nintendo	208	T
That's So Raven: Psychic on the Scene	N/A	Buena Vista	210	E
Theme Park	6.0	Electronic Arts	215	E
Time Ace	6.5	Konami	216	E10+
TMNT	5.5	Konami	214	E10+
Tom and Jerry Tales	N/A	Warner Bros. Interactive	210	E
Tomb Raider: Legend	4.5	Eidos	210	T
• Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	7.5	Activision	211	E
Totally Spies! 2: Undercover	N/A	Atari	213	E10+
Touch Detective	6.0	Atlus	210	E10+
Trioncube	5.5	Namco Bandai	213	E



SUPER PAPER MARIO

Stylish environments, amusing dialogue—Super Paper Mario has plenty of charm to go around. But on its most basic level, it gets right something that very few games do—it gives you a reason to use multiple characters throughout the game. You can get through most games without switching up the main character, but Super Paper Mario excels at promoting the individual abilities of its colorful cast members.

— Giancarlo V.

>FINAL FANTASY FABLES: CHOCOBO TALES

Chocobo Tales proves that even an uninspired game concept can be impressive when it gets the AAA treatment from a first-rate development team. I'm really looking forward to Square-Enix's upcoming DS releases.

—Drew W.

OF-A-KIND
Take Another Turn
+1
+10

PUZZLE QUEST: CHALLENGE OF THE WARLORDS

This bizarre puzzle-based RPG pays major homage to the pen-and-paper days of the genre with its dice-like randomness, and manages to offer a refreshing perspective on modern-day RPG battle systems at the same time. But Puzzle Quest is by no means perfect—its difficulty is wildly unbalanced from battle to battle, and the AI in single-player mode is very one-dimensional. Still, I haven't been able to put the game down for weeks.

—Andy M.

Title	Score	Publisher	Vol.	ESRB
Wario: Master of Disguise	6.5	Nintendo	214	E10+
Winning Eleven Pro Evolution Soccer 2007	6.5	Konami	213	E
X-Men: The Official Game	7.0	Activision	205	E10+
Xiaolin Showdown	5.0	Konami	212	E
Yoshi's Island DS	8.0	Nintendo	211	E
• Yu-Gi-Oh! Spirit Caller	N/A	Konami	213	E
• Yu-Gi-Oh! World Championship Tournament 2007	N/A	Konami	215	E
GAME BOY ADVANCE				
Alex Rider: Stormbreaker	N/A	THQ	208	E10+
The Ant Bully	N/A	Midway	208	E
Arthur and the Invisibles	N/A	Atari	213	E
Avatar: The Last Airbender	N/A	THQ	210	E
Babar to the Rescue	N/A	THe Game Factory	206	E
Back to Stone	N/A	Grafitti Entertainment	214	E
Backyard Basketball 2007	N/A	Atari	209	E
The Barnyard	6.5	THQ	207	E
Battle B-Daman	6.5	Atlus	207	E
Battle B-Daman: Fire Spirits!	6.5	Atlus	210	E
Bionicle Heroes	N/A	Eidos	211	E
Bratz: Forever Diamonds	N/A	THQ	210	E
Capcom Classics Mini Mix	7.5	Capcom	209	T
Cars	6.5	THQ	206	E
The Cheetah Girls	N/A	Buena Vista	208	E
Disney's American Dragon: Jake Long—Rise of the Huntsclan	N/A	Buena Vista	208	E10+
Eragon	N/A	Vivendi	211	E10+
FIFA 07	N/A	Electronic Arts	210	E
Final Fantasy V Advance	8.5	Nintendo	210	E
Final Fantasy VI Advance	9.5	Nintendo	213	E10+
Flushed Away	N/A	D3PA	210	E
Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	N/A	Crave Entertainment	213	E
Games Explosion!	4.0	THQ	208	E
Ghost Rider	N/A	2K Games	213	T
Harlem Globetrotters World Tour	N/A	DSI	211	E
Justic League Heroes: The Flash	5.5	Warner Bros. Interactive	210	E10+
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	N/A	Sierra	209	E
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	N/A	LucasArts	209	E
Madden NFL 07	7.0	Electronic Arts	208	E
Mazes of Fate	N/A	Graffiti Entertainment	213	T
Meet the Robinsons	N/A	Buena Vista	215	E
Mega Man Battle Network 6: Cybeast Gregar & Cybeast Falzar	7.5	Capcom	206	E
Miss Spider's Harvest Time Hop & Fly	N/A	The Game Factory	206	E
Monster House	5.0	THQ	207	E
Naruto: Ninja Council 2	5.5	Tomy/D3PA	210	E10+
Need For Speed: Carbon	N/A	Electronic Arts	211	E
Nicktoons: Battle for Volcano Island	N/A	THQ	210	E
Open Season	N/A	Ubisoft	209	E
Over the Hedge	3.5	Activision	205	E
Over the Hedge: Hammy Goes Nuts	N/A	Activision	210	E
Phil of the Future	N/A	Buena Vista	208	E
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	7.5	Buena Vista	206	E10+
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Red Rescue Team	8.0	Nintendo	209	E
Polarium Advance	N/A	Atlus	212	E
The Santa Clause 3	N/A	Buena Vista	209	E
Shrek Smash N' Crash Racing	N/A	Activision	213	E10+
The Sims 2 Pets	N/A	Electronic Arts	211	E
Sonic the Hedgehog Genesis	6.0	Sega	211	E
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	N/A	THQ	210	E
Sudoku Mania	N/A	UFO Interactive	206	E
Summon Night: Swordcraft Story	8.0	Atlus	207	E10+
Summon Night: Swordcraft Story 2	8.0	Atlus	210	E10+
Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation	6.5	Atlus	207	T
Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation 2	7.0	Atlus	211	T
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Double Pack	N/A	Konami	206	E
TMNT	7.0	Konami	214	E10+
Tom and Jerry Tales	N/A	Warner Bros. Interactive	210	E
Tomb Raider: Legend	N/A	Eidos	210	T
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	7.5	Activision	211	E
Totally Spies! 2: Undercover	N/A	Atari	213	E10+
X-Men: The Official Game	3.5	Activision	205	E10+
Yggdra Union	7.5	Atlus	211	T

EVENTS

Retro Rumble

The pro wrestlers of WWE aren't just a bunch of tough guys (and gals)—they're gamers, too.

Two days prior to WrestleMania 23—held at Detroit's Ford Field on April 1—we sat down with several WWE superstars to discuss which video games were their favorites when they were growing up, and which ones they'd play if they had the chance.

Ashley Massaro: I used to play video games all the time when I was a kid. I played Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!! and Mortal Kombat, Street Fighter II—I love those games. I just liked Chun Li and the green guy. I used to play the green guy all the time.

Batista

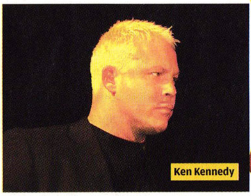
Batista: Honestly, I didn't play a whole lot of video games. I'm old. I'm from a generation where I was outside all the time. But myself, I would definitely play Resident Evil. Who doesn't like killing zombies?

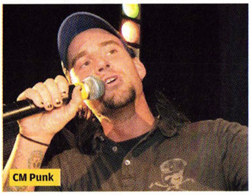
Ken Kennedy: My favorite old Nintendo game? I remember I used to play Kid Niki. That was one of my favorites, [although] I realize it's kind of stupid. [Also] Blaster Master, Karnov, and, of course, all the others like Super Mario Bros. I was like, man, I don't see how this could possibly ever get any better.

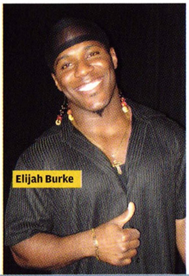
Elijah Burke: Pro Wrestling; you remember that? It had the Star Man. Star Man was my favorite one. Wrestling games were really hard to come by at that time, so when Pro Wrestling came out—and looking back, it was really a horrible game—you know, that was the game. Pro Wrestling was the game to play back then.

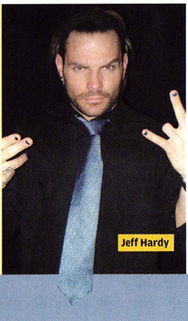
Jeff Hardy: [I played] classic ones way back . . . Super Mario Bros. and that kind of thing. My brother [WWE Tag Team Champion Matt Hardy] was probably into them more than I was. I would roll with Zelda, man. Zelda was very intriguing. I remember back in the day, just the whole mystery behind it and everything. I would pick Zelda.

CM Punk: I'd be hard-pressed to try to pick a favorite. Kung Fu was always fun, just because I liked kicking things—and people. Ghosts 'n Goblins, because I'm also a huge horror-genre fan. I also liked playing Duck Hunt with my father, because he would get so frustrated and he would go right up to the screen and he still couldn't hit anything, and that's always fun to watch.
—Chris H.


Ken Kennedy


CM Punk


Elijah Burke


Jeff Hardy

Ashley decorates her dress with the skulls of fallen Street Fighter II players.

Ashley Massaro

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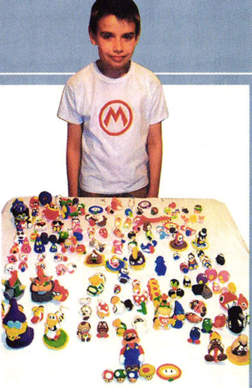
ART

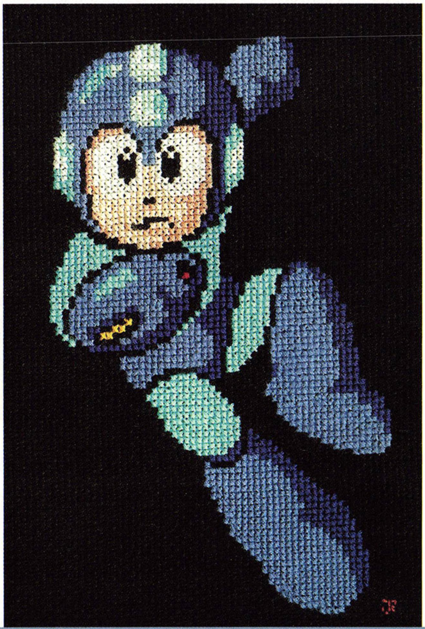
In real 3-D!



We talk a lot about 3-D modelling in video games, but Chad C. takes the notion a step further. Using modeling clay, Chad produces colorful miniatures of Nintendo characters. He estimates he's made close to 400 of these amazing figurines. The clay Goombas that Chad sent us are getting tons of buzz around the NP office, too. —Chris S.

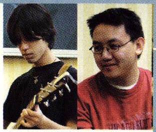
Nice Threads

Joe R. from Massachusetts has combined his two top hobbies—playing video games and cross-stitching—to create these impressive embroidery designs. In addition to the Mega Man 3 and Punch-Out!! patterns shown here, Joe has created cross-stitches based on Metroid, River City Ransom, and more. You can see them at www.myspace.com/videogamecrossstitch. —Chris H.



MUSIC

You Spoony Bards!



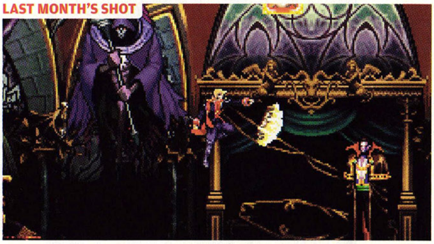
Taking their name from a classic FINAL FANTASY IV moment, The Spoony Bards—a portable, eclectic, cosplaying video game cover band—must be heard to be believed. Check them out at ColossalCon 2007 in Cleveland, Ohio on June 15th, or visit www.spoonybards.com for an extensive collection of videos and mp3s. —Andy M.

SCREEN TEST

Super Paper Luigi

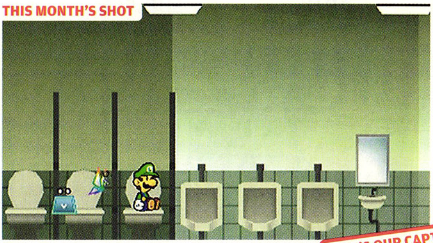
Poor Luigi—he's always the butt of the joke. Coincidentally, he's also the subject of our monthly Screen Test. We've already received one quality caption for last month's Castlevania shot (we'll run more next month), but Mario's green-clad bro deserves even better. Send your cleverest caption to community@nintendopower.com. Do it for Luigi!

LAST MONTH'S SHOT



"When it seemed there was no hope left, and that darkness would prevail, Jonathan remembered his years in clown training." —Zalphos

THIS MONTH'S SHOT



"Thudley, Tiptron . . . how about a little privacy?"

HERE'S OUR CAPTION. Think you can do better?

EVENTS

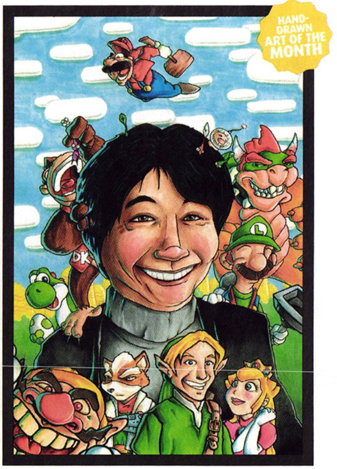
Naruto Hits the Road

If the gazillion Naruto Miis in our inbox are any indicator, Naruto is now officially a phenomenon—so let's celebrate! Fans can head on down to the Naruto Road Show (coming to a Wal-Mart near you) to play some games and indulge in all things Naruto. The tour kicks off on May 26th in Secaucus, New Jersey—check naruto.viz.com/roadshow for dates and updated info. —Andy M.

ART OF THE MONTH

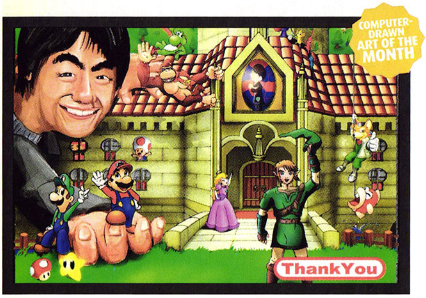
Master Works

There is probably nobody in the video game world more iconic than the subject of our art of the month. The smiling face of Shigeru Miyamoto, the creator of Donkey Kong, Mario, and The Legend of Zelda, is known throughout the world. Check out the nintendo.com forums for even more Miyamoto-inspired masterpieces.


HAND-DRAWN ART OF THE MONTH
DK

ARTIST:
SALVO_DELI

SUBJECT:
SHIGERU MIYAMOTO


COMPUTER-DRAWN ART OF THE MONTH
ThankYou

ARTIST:
CHRISBEST

SUBJECT:
SHIGERU MIYAMOTO

Looking to submit art for the first time and not sure what to do? Visit **forums.nintendo.com** for details. Be sure to read the rules before you post your masterpieces.

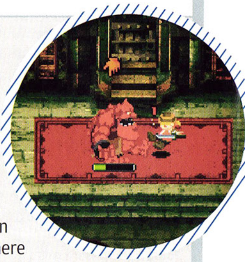
Reader Review

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!

Each month we encourage our readers to submit reviews for games, but remember to follow the rules: keep them under 300 words, and check your spelling! If you'd like to submit a review for NP, first become an Nsider at Nintendo.com. Then head to the Reviews forum and submit your game critique. Reviews are selected based on overall writing quality, objectivity, and game knowledge.

Contact

Reviewed by:
PSYCHO_SNAKE_NINJA



Contact is not your average role-playing game. In fact, the only role you play in Contact is yourself. You do not directly control the main character so much as show him where to go and who to fight. You are more of a guide, but you also play a role in the story.

From the moment you begin Contact, it's evident that one of the game's foremost intentions is to defy every cliché that the role-playing genre has ever had. There is no spiky-haired hero, no amnesia, no overdramatic monologues, and certainly no lame turn-based battles. Contact is all about realism, and though it involves magic, interstellar travel, and the occasional use of attack stickers, the system behind it all focuses on being as logical and realistic as possible. Instead of leveling up and having all of your character's stats increase evenly, stats level up individually based on how much you use them—for instance, the more beatings your character takes, the more his defense and health stats go up.

Contact also incorporates some features that are reminiscent of life simulations. You can guide your main character to hunt and fish, and then bring your catches home and cook them. Cooking is a very important skill, and dishes you eat to regain health also take up stomach space, so you can't just eat as much as you want.

Contact features some exquisite graphics—everything in the game is beautifully detailed. Some of the sound effects are less than stellar, but the in-game music is phenomenal.

Overall, Contact is one of the most revolutionary and amazing games around, though it may be easily overlooked as its uniqueness lacks mass appeal.

CALL TO ACTION

Play It Loud!

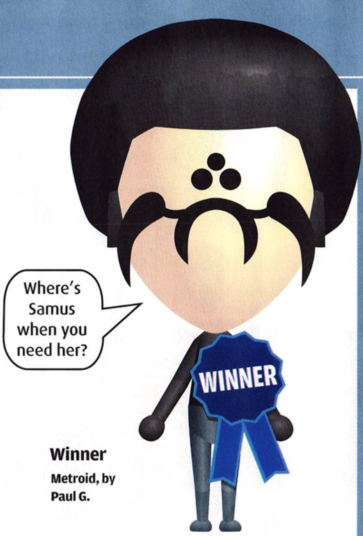
Nintendo games both old and new have influenced musicians around the world, from the Spoony Bards to some of us here at the NP offices. We've covered a number of musicians and bands in past issues, but we want to hear more! Drop us a line and tell us some of your favorite game-related music projects.

community@nintendopower.com

Mii OF THE MONTH

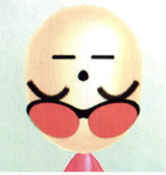
Metroid and Mii

Mario Party 8 sets an interesting precedent by allowing Miis to interact with characters from a well-established franchise. Based on the hundreds of video-game-themed Miis we received this month, its clear that Wii owners are in strong support of this concept. Metroid has been an especially popular subject. We've seen quite a few attempts to create a Metroid Mii, but reader Paul G.'s easily takes the ribbon. Not only is his Metroid spot-on; it's actually *latched* onto the character's head. Still, Paul's creation was closely followed by three highly impressive Miis. —ANDY M.

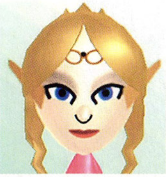

Where's Samus when you need her?
WINNER

Winner
Metroid, by Paul G.

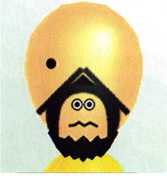
Runners-Up:



Kirby, by Anthony M.



Princess Zelda, by Zach M.



Pac-Man, by Mike T.

EVENTS

Rats in the Kitchen

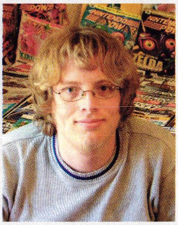
Ratatouille director Brad Bird (The Iron Giant, The Incredibles) and Pixar have given the notion that rats love cheese a twist by cooking up the story of rodent Remy who dreams of being a gourmet chef. To promote the game based on the movie (out June 26th, three days before the film's release), THQ recently invited members of the press and their families to The Institute of Culinary Education in New York to learn how to cook the French stew that gives the story its name. In a predinner session participants sliced and diced their way through the Wii version of the game, experiencing 3-D platforming and cooking-themed minigames, then it was off to the kitchen for the main event. Thanks to the aid of the institute's chefs, there were no lost fingers or grease fires during the production of the meal. Patton Oswalt, the voice of Remy, was on hand to sample the food and talk about the project. When asked how he prepared for the role of a rat, he said, "You know, I wish I could give you a Robert De Niro thing where I studied rats or wore a costume, but basically I just translated my enthusiasm for food—I'm a big foodie—into that and it ended up working out really well." —GEORGE S.

Patton Oswalt (left) and Pixar artist Pete Sohn (right) discussed the making of *Ratatouille* with a hungry crowd. Sohn played Remy's brother Emile and directed the other actors during the game's voice sessions.

Ratatouille (the dish) is a blend of eggplant, squash, and tomatoes with plenty of fresh herbs. Anne, the wife of NP writer George Sinfield, prepares the herbs for the big meal.

SUBSCRIBER PROFILE

Meet a fellow NP reader and Nintendo fan.



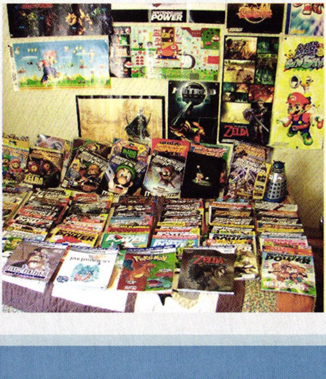
Name:
Mike D.

Age:
21

Subscriber since:
2001

Favorite game:
The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time

It's always cool to hear from readers like Mike—a longtime fan (though he didn't become a subscriber himself until '01) and active NSider—who grew up with Nintendo Power. "I began playing the NES at around the age of three, and later, when I learned to read, it was NP that I began reading." Move over, Roald Dahl!



NEXT MONTH

It's a month of surprises! If you think you know about all of the upcoming Wii and Nintendo DS games, think again.

NO PAIN, NO GAIN

Is your brain ready for a workout? Check out our full coverage on Big Brain Academy: Wii Degree—the latest Nintendo game to make your brain sweat.

THE SOUL STILL BURNS

Nacmo Bandai hits us from out of the blue with Soul Calibur Legends for Wii, but it's not what you think. Learn more about this intriguing third-person adventure game next month!

TREASURE HUNTING

Lara Croft gets a facelift in this Wii interpretation of one of the most popular games in the last decade. Find out what you can expect from the remake of the original Tomb Raider.

WELCOME TO THE PARTY

Square Enix is supporting Nintendo in such a big way that it needed to throw an event to cover it all. From FINAL FANTASY to Dragon Quest, check out what Square Enix has in store for Wii and Nintendo DS in the coming months.

CONTACTS

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NINTENDO ONLINE
Your official Nintendo online source.
www.nintendo.com

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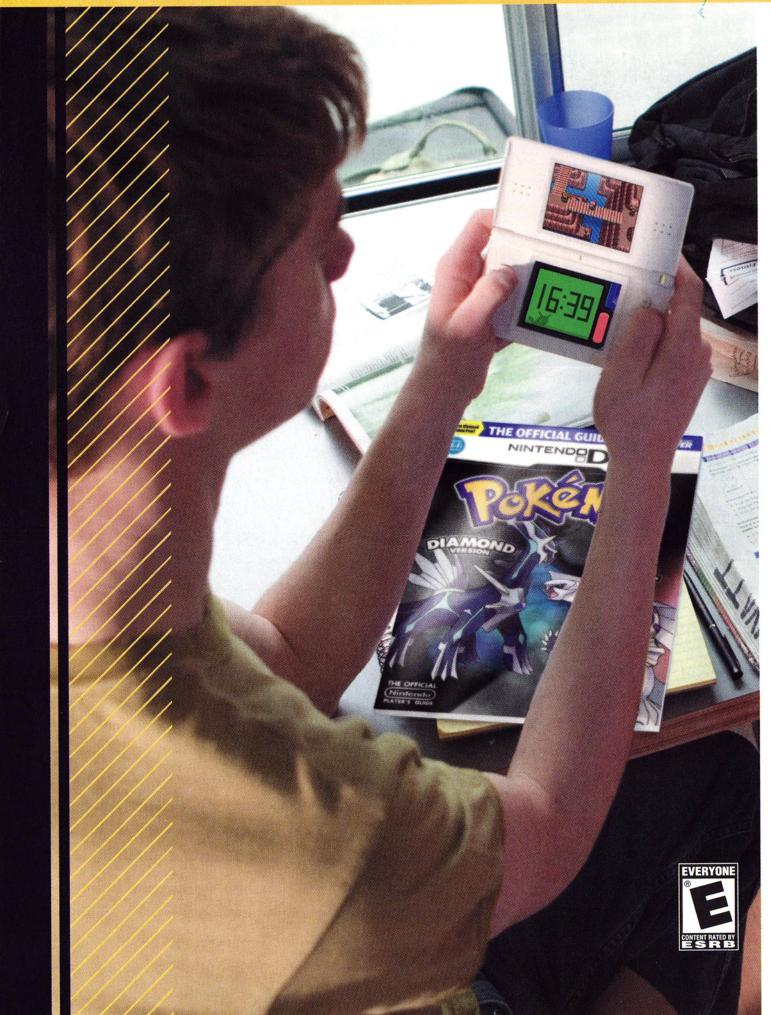
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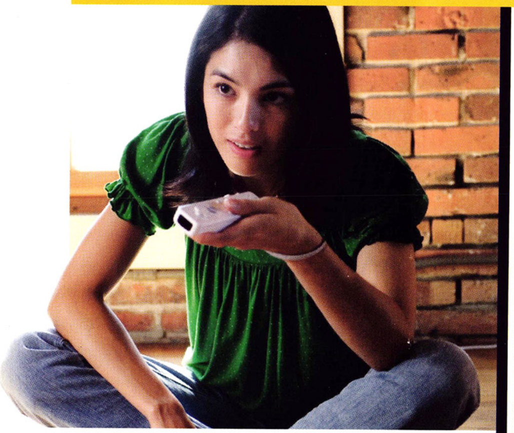

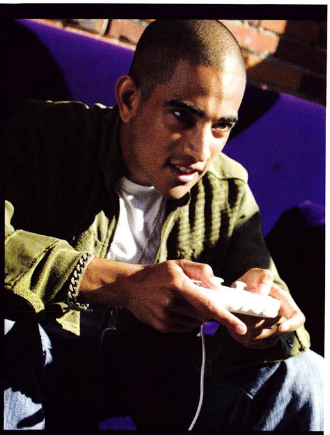

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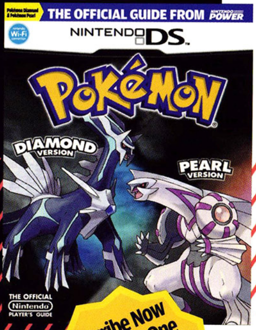
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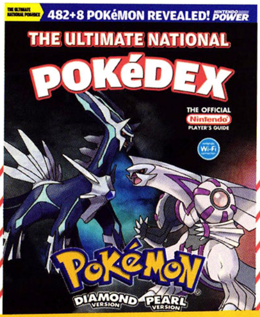
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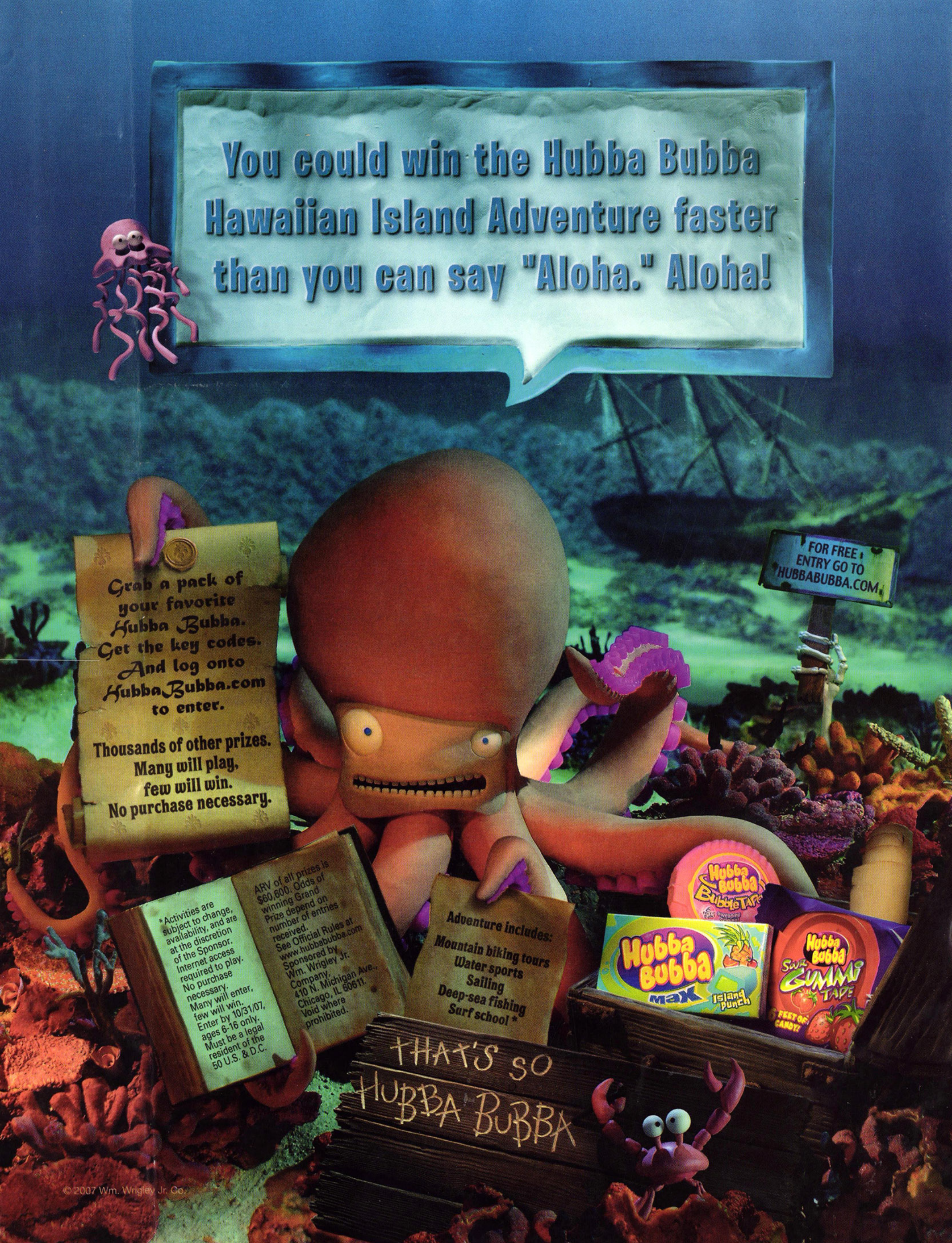

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